# HISTORY OF JAINISM IN BIHAR

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## PREFACE

During my Post Graduate studies in Patna University, I felt a great lack of some authentic work on the history of Jainism in Eastern India and while I came in the field of research, I decided to work on the history of Jainism in Bihar, where the new revolutionary religions like Jainism and Buddhism took birth, developed and spread The present volume is very much connected with my research work, in which I have tried to deal with the rise of Jainism in Bihar in the 6th century B C and also with the last phase of its existence prior to the mighty invasion of the Muslims of this land in and about the 12th century A D Though this work does not contain the philosophical aspects of Jainism, however its various other vital controversies have been attempted to be dealt with while showing the popularity and continuity of this religion in Bihar during the period under review, e g , the place of birth and nirvana of Tirthankar Mahavira, popularity of Jainism in the royal houses of his time, effects of his preachings upon the general masses, inclination of this cult of, and acceptance thereof by great rulers like Bimbisara, Ajatasatru, Padma Nanda, Chandragupta and Ashoka, the parting away of the Ajivikas from that of Jainism and their re-union, exact period and causes of the division of Jain religion into its two factions, viz , Svetambaras and Digambaras, the strong position of Jainism during the Gupta period migration of the Jainas to South Bihar, causes for the decline of this cult in North India, and many other such aspects relating to this period and area

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I acknowledge my deep gratitude to numerous authors on Jaina History, whose works I had occasion to consult during the course of this study

It is my sacred duty to express my gratefulness to my learned father late Sri C N Tiwary who read the manuscript several times and suggested valuable alterations and corrections and to my mother for her ungrudging help and loving care, which sustained to complete the work

I would be failing in my duties if I miss to acknowledge my deep sense of obligation to my Bhaiya and Bhabhi Sri A K Tiwary and Sushma respectively and also to my sister Shobha, who never lagged behind in lending their affection to me throughout my research

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Lastly, I convey my thanks to all my well wishers, who, may have escaped my attention

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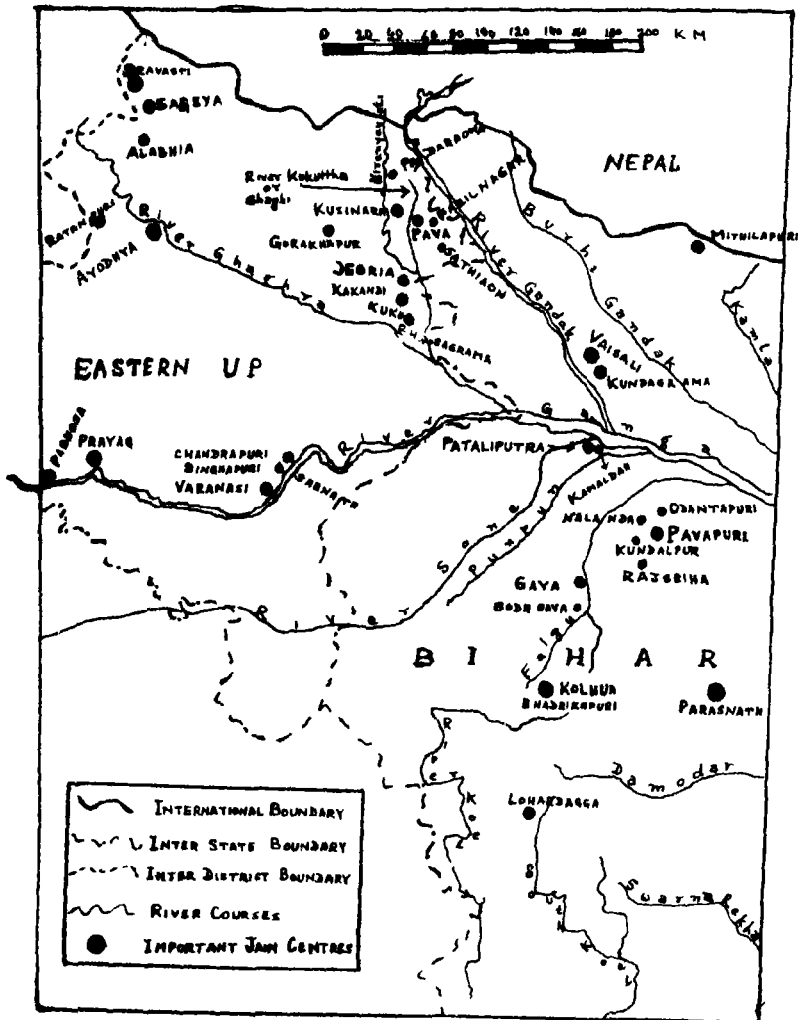
# SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

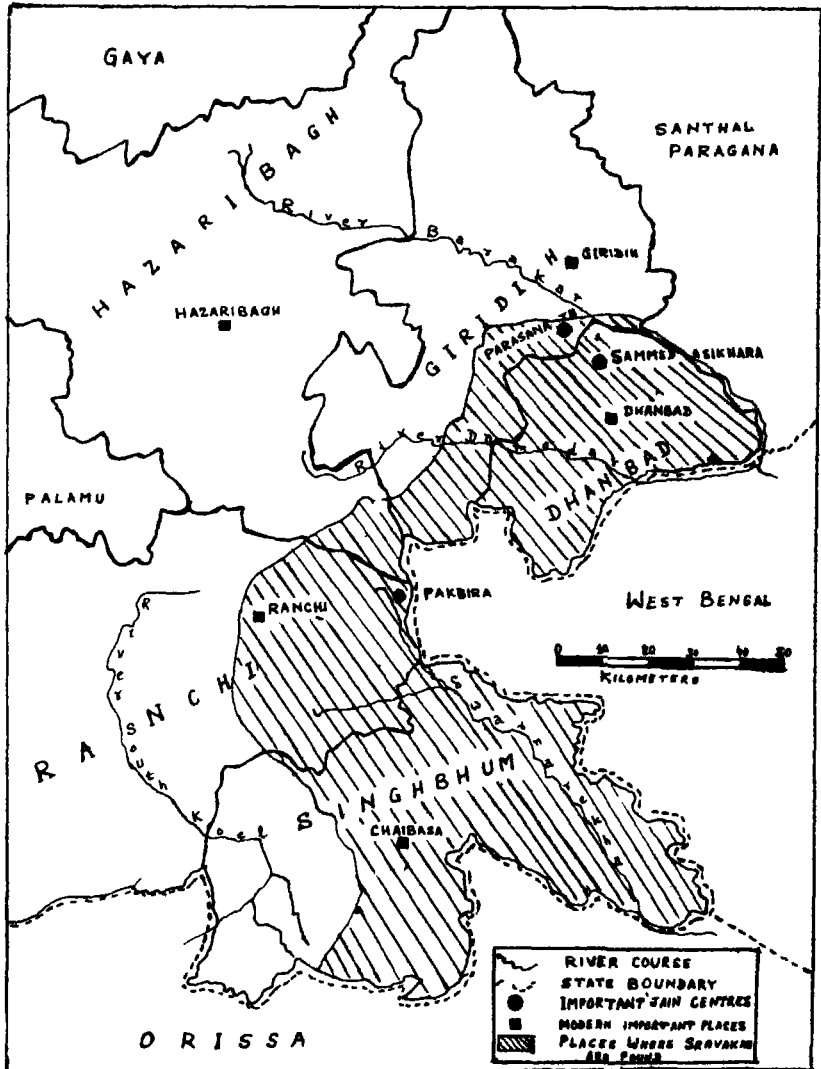
| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| अ | a | क | k | च् | C | ट् | t | त् | t |
| आ | a | ख् | kh | छ् | ch | ठ् | th | थ् | th |
| इ | i | ग् | g | ज् | j | ड् | d | द् | d |
| ई | i | घ् | gh | झ् | jh | ढ | dh | ध् | dh |
| उ | u | ङ् | n | ञ् | n | ण | n | न् | n |
| ऊ | u | | | | | | | | |
| ए | e | य् | y | श् | s | ह् | h | | |
| ऐ | ai | र् | r | ष् | s | क्ष् | ks | | |
| ओ | au | ल् | l | स | s | त्र | tr | | |
| ऋ | r | व् | v | | | ज्ञ् | jn | | |
| प् | p | | | | | | | | |
| फ् | ph | | | | | | | | |
| ब् | b | | | | | | | | |
| भ् | bh | | | | | | | | |
| म | m | | | | | | | | |

Anusvara — m, n
visarga b

MAP NO 1

IMPORTANT JAIN CENTRES OF BIHAR

MAP NO 2

THE POSITION OF PAVAPURI OF BIHAR & PAVA OF EASTERN U P

MAP NO 3

AREA OF SOUTH BIHAR WHERE JAIN SRAVAKAS RESIDE EVEN TODAY

# INTRODUCTION

The 6th century B C was an age of intellectual ferment when new religious, philosophical and political ideas were being evolved all over the world In Greece, it was the time of the Ionian philosophers and of Pythagoras, in China, of Lao-tze and Confucious, and in Persia, of Zoraster In India itself, there was also a great religious turmoil, and when the six schools of Hindu philosophy were appearing and paving the way for the rise of Buddhism, there reappeared another system, and in a short time it began to claim a place by the side of the chief religions of the country This was Jainism

Having been a religion of very ancient and hoary antiquity, Jainism re-appeared' in the 6th century B C It is not an offshoot either of Buddhism or of the ancient Hinduism, but is more ancient than those Thus, the ancient religious history of this part of India should be written in the light of Jainism The Jainas believe that their religion had been revealed, from time to time, in the endless succeeding periods of the world history, by great souls, whom they call Tirthankaras, of which Risabha was the first and Mahavira, the last And it was by the advent of the last Tirthankara Mahavira, that Jainism received a fresh vigour during the period, i e , the 6th century B C

**The Area of Study**

There then existed sixteen great states or *Mahajanapadas* [1] Though names of several *Mahajanapadas* have been given in different Buddhist and Jain texts, we find a complete list of the

sixteen *Mahajanapadas* in the *Anguttar Nikaya*[2] of the Pali *Sutta Pitaka,* which seems to be more reliable and trustworthy Out of these sixteen states, at least three of them lay within the bounds of modern Bihar and among them the most famous states of North Eastern India were Magadha, Vajji (Vrjji) and Anga, which flourished independently, side by side during the time of Mahavira, with their respective political autonomy, by following a policy of expansion The sources inform us that while the nature of the administration of some of these *Mahajanapadas* was Monarchical, some of them were of the Republican form

During the time of Mahavira, Magadha corresponded roughly with the present areas of Patna, Gaya, Nalanda, Nawadah, Aurangabad and Jehanabad districts of South Bihar [3] It's earliest capital was *Girivraja* or Rajagriha Under Bimbisara and Ajatasatru, Magadha rose to such an eminence that even centuries later and till *Asoka* s *Kalinga* war, the history of Northern India is practically the history of Magadha

Anga is indentified with the present districts of Bhagalpur, Monghyr and a portion of Santhal Paragana having its capital at Champa At the time of Mahavira, the capital was a pretty prosperous city, a detailed description of which has been given in the *Ovaiya* [4] The river Champa, flowing between Anga and Magadha, separated the two Kingdoms [5] But there was a constant war between the two[6] and finally *Anga* became a subject to Sreniya Bimbisara

The Vajji territory lay north of the Ganges and extended as far as the Nepal hills The Vajjis were included into the eight confederate clans[7], among which the Lichchavis, the *Jnatrikas*[8] and the Videhans[9] became famous The *Majjhima Nikaya*[10] refers to the good relation subsisting between Vaisali and Kosala, a

republican state in the vicinity of modern eastern U P

We find a very significant characteristic in the *janapadas* vis-a-vis the ancient Indian society Throughout this period, and upto the close of the Gupta period (c A D 540), although the political rivalry among *janapadas* continued incessantly, a feeling of universal fraternity and socio-economic-religious equality remained strong and active The *janapada* patriotism and the love of the different nationals for their respective *janapadas* continued to remain strong and sincere In the Maurya period decrying another's *janapadas* was a cause for libel[11] Seals of janapada-corporations, inscribed in characters of the third and fifth centuries A D have been found in excavations of ancient sites This shows that the group life of various Indian regions, which started in the Vedic age, continued right upto the end of the Gupta period at least

In addition to these Republican and Monarchical states in Bihar, the ancient scriptures mention of six big towns of Ancient India, which were important from the view point of both socio-economic and religious activities The six towns referred to are Champa (modern Bhagalpur), Rajgriha (Rajgir in South Bihar), Sageya or Saketa (in Eastern U P ), Kausambi (fifty kilometers from Allahabad), Banaras (Varanasi in U P ) and Kusinara (modern Kasia in eastern U P )[12] Thus, at leat two of the towns of national importance are covered by the subject under study Both of the towns were closely connected with the activities of the Jain *Tirthankaras* and we find that it was in the areas of modern Bihar state that Jainism took birth, developed and spread, and it got a retard only when the Muhammadans started invasion and destructions

The region under the present work has served as the firm

cradle of Jainism, as most of the Jain *Tirthankaras* were connected to this portion of Eastern India, where they took birth, propagated their religions, and finally attained the *nirvana* The last and the most popular teacher of Jainism, Mahavira, liked this area of the eastern part of the country so much that he declared it as the sacred one for the spread of his religion and even forbade his followers to go out of it

So far as the *nirvana* of *Tirthankara* Mahavira is concered, almost all the published works regard Pavapuri of Bihar to be the place of *nirvana* of Mahavira But there is no literary or archaeological evidence to corroborate their hypothesis It was in 1203 A D only that we find Pavapuri[13] becoming a *tirthasthan* for the Jainas So, for the purpose of examining the authenticity of the place of *nirvana* of Mahavira, this work has been extended upto the 12th century A D It was during this century that Prithiviraj third was defeated at the hands of Muhammad Ghori (1192 A D ) and within a few years, the Hindu rule came to an end in the whole of the Northern India[14] In the beginning of 13th century A D (1206 A D ), the Muslim rule came into existence in India and the Muslim period of Indian History started It was also during this period that Jainism finally migrated from the Eastern to the Southern and Western parts of this country

The Jainas constitute today a small community in Bihar But the impact of Jain culture in this region is quite marked The main concentrations of the Jainas in these areas are in urban areas, where they are mostly engaged in trade and business professions The reasons for the decrease in their number in the eastern parts of India may not be quite clear unless we know something of the past history of Jainism in this land

This period of the present work (c B C 600-1200 A D )

is important for a study of the transformation of the economic life of the people of Bihar, which helped in the rise and growth of Jainsim in this region In the 8th-7th centuries B C , the people of the Gangetic valley started utilising iron on a wider scale [15] Wood lands were cleared and brought under plough, especially in the parts of Bihar [16] Improved knowledge of cultivation and the use of effective implements made it possible for the peasants to produce more surplus, which utlimately helped the growth of town [17] The Jain canonical writings mention of different kinds of urban centres in the age of Mahavira. Trade was both the cause and effect of increasing urbanisation [18] Several kings of merchandise are found mentioned in the contemporary literatures This all led to the rise of a wealthy class in the society, consisting of mainly the members of the *Vaisyas,* the third rank of the Brahmanical *varna* system

The newly developed features of the social and economic life of the people did not fit in with the Vedic ritualism and animal sacrifices, which had led to cause a senseless decimation of the cattle wealth, which was the main basis of the new plough-agriculture [19] This growth of idea detracted the people from the Vedic way of life, and they were attracted towards the new religions, paving the way for their rise Thus, in the sixth century B C in the Gangetic valley, there emerged many new religious teachers, who preached against Vedic religion But of all such sects prevalent in the North India, only Jainism and Buddhism came to stay as independent religions The Jain ideas were already circulated in the 7th century B C by Parsvanatha, and Mahavira organised as well as propagated them in a society favourable to him, and for the type of his religion

Some work has been done on the history of Jainism in Northern India relating to the period under review, but not much is known

to us there from about the existence, development, spread and decline of this religion in Bihar, nor about any royal patronage given to it by different kings and princes from 600 B C to 1200 A D During this period Jainism played an important role and exercised an enviable influence in this region, and remained in one way from or the other till the Muhammadan invasions

Although, Jainism made valuable contributions to history and way of life of Bihar, it has not so far received the due attention it deserves It is really disappointing to find that even in this area of eastern India, the history of Jainism is still in dark This is why it cannot be said with perfection as for how long it remained a popular religion in Bihar and who were the kings under whose regime it got royal patronage Here, we have to depend on archaeological evidences which show its popularity in this region to a great extent [20] Prominent scholars like Shah[21], Raychaudhary[22], Chatterjee[23], Thakur[24] and Jain[25] have referred to the history of Jainism in Bihar But after going through all these works on the subject, we do not get an adequate and comprehensive picutre of the development, existence and spread of this religion in the area referred to above The works done so far touch only the fringe and the vast problem remains as before

## SOURCES

Our sources are both Literary and Archaeological The literary sources may be divided into four headings, viz , Brahmanical, Buddhist, Jaina and foreign accounts Similarly, the archaeological sources are also sub-divided into Inscriptions, Art-Architecture and Monuments

The oldest part of the Brahmanical literature are the Vedic texts They can be put into several classess, like *Samhitas,* the

*Brahmanas*, the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanisads* The earliest references to Bihar is in the *Atharva Veda*, a work of about 10th-8th centuries B C and in the *Panchavimsa Brahmana*, a work of about 8th-6th centuries B C For the reconstruction of the dynastic history of this region, we have to fall back upon the *Puranas* and to some extent upon the two epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* Although these texts were finally written down in the post Maurya and the Gupta period, they contain some old traditions regarding the important dynasties of our period, whose history has been reconstructed by Paragiter[26] But the Brahmanical texts contain only stray references of Jainism which do not help much in making a clear picture of this religion in our region and period

Literary sources become a little firmer when we take up the history of Bihar in the age of the Buddha The history of pre-Maurya times has to be mainly written on the basis of Buddhist literature, supplemented by the *Puranas* and the *Dharmasastras*

The Buddhist canon is primarily concerned with the early Buddhist doctrines but incidentally it throws light on the position of Jainism as well Among the Buddhist canonical texts, the *Pitakas* keep its own place The Mahavagga and the Chullavagga of the *Vinaya Pitaka*[27] are noteworthy, as they not only throw some light on the different religious organisations, but deal with other fields also The *Sutta Pitaka* comprises the following five collections called Nikayas (i) *Digha* (ii) *Majjhima* (iii) *Samyutta* (iv) *Anguttara* and (v) *Khuddaka* The *Anguttara Nikaya* mentions the state, republics and monarchies existing in North Eastern India in the age of the Buddha, and some of these *Mahajanapadas* situated in Bihar In the *Digha*, *Majjhima* and *Anguttara Nikayas*, there are references to Jain *Tirthankaras* and *Nigganthas* Some of the references given in these texts are also preserved in Jain texts which prove the correctness of the traditions

The *Brahmajalasutta* of the Dighnikaya is important for the history of not only Buddhism, but also of the entire religious life and thought of Ancient India The *Samanaphalasutta, Mahaparinibban Sutta* and *Mahasudarsana Sutta* also give an idea of the land, people, government and religious condition of the people of this area

The *Theragatha* and *Therigatha*[28] are very important on account of the picture of life they portray and they give us a valuable insight into the social and religious conditions of those days The *Jatakas,* which form a part of the *Khuddaka Nikaya* of the *Sutta Pitaka,* are generally concerned with the day-to-day life of the people Some of the *Jatakas*[29] supply valuable material for the reconstruction of the political, social, economic and religious history of the portion of India of our study

Direct evidence is furnished to us by the Jain literary works It is only during the past fifty years or so that scholars have thrown some interesting and valuable light on the scientific and logical study of the Jain literature, which had remained so long in partial oblivion, and they are beginning to realise its importance even as a prolific source of history The Jain literature has been divided in four sub classes (i) Canonical literary works, (ii) Exegeses of the canons (Niryuktis, Bhasa, Churni and Tika etc ), (iii) Puranas and Charitras and (iv) Miscellaneous works

The canonical works of the Jainas did not originate at one particular point of time They are vast and varied and not confined purely to its religion and philosophy, which was not so in the case with the Buddhists Though their traditions can be traced back to 600 B C [30], their literary activity commenced in a regular form only about the beginning of the Christian era It went on gathering force during the succeeding centuries, and the period

of thousand years, from Samantabhadra to Hemchandra (2nd to 12th centuries A D ), marked the golden age of Jainism in general and of its literature in particular, especially the mid centuries (5th to 10th centuries) of that millennium The most important feature of the Jain literature is that it is written in several languages Jain texts are found in Ardhamagadhi, Prakrit, Sanskrit and Varnaculars Even now, the Jain texts are being written in modern Indian languages like Gujarati, Hindi, Marwari, Tamil, Kannada and Telegu and other regional languages

The important canonical texts are the *Kalpasutra, Sutrakritanga, Uttaradhyayana, Acaranga, Vyakhya, Prajnapati* or the *Bhagawati, Niryavali Sutra, Upasakadasa, Jnatradharmakatha, Aupapatika Sutra, Rajaprasniya Sutra* and *Avasyaka Sutra* Though they are called the *Pravachanas* of the Tirthankaras and Jainas, their cheif interest lies also in the clear presentation of various topics relating to the political and cultural aspects of the country The *Sutrakritanga, Uttaradyayana* and the *Acaranga* contain the oldest part of the canon from the linguistic and literary point of view

The *Kalpasutra* is divided into three sections The first section of this text contains the life and teachings of Mahavira in detail, while section two deals with the expansion of the *Sanghas* into various *ganas, sakhas* and *kulas* as well as their spread over Bihar, Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and other parts of India, and section three contains the rules for the ascetics It also refers to the nine Lichchavis as having formed a league with nine Mallikas and eighteen clan lords of Kasi-Kosala[31]

The *Bhagwati*[32] and *Uvasagadasao* Sutras[33], with other things, deal with the rival schools founded by Gosala and Jamali during the life time of Tirthankara Mahavira[34]. Mahavira discloses in

*Bhagwati Sutra*[35] that Devananda is his mother[36] The *Aupapatika* is historically significant because it described in detail the meeting between king Ajatasatru and Mahavira[37] The *Niryavaliya Sutra* deals with king Srenik, his queens, daughter-in-laws and the famous battle between king Kunika and Chetaka[38]

All these *sutras* deal with the religion of Mahavira and the position of Jainism during those days These show the life of Mahavira, his teachings and various kings acknowledging the religion of Tirthankara Mahavira

The number of the literature interpreting the canons is very vast, but this commentarial literature appears to be trustworthy, as their authors have attempted to make them original while illustrating the tenets of the canons The oldest explanatory literature has been represented in the form of *Niryuktis* which contain a number of historical or legendary tales elucidating Jain doctrines and moral or disciplinary rules given in the Jain canons These commentaries were written by several *acharyas* from the 2nd century A D and onwards The *Niryuktis* are ten in number

The next chronological stage of development in the commentarial literature after the *Niryuktis* are *Bhasyas* and *Churnis* These were written mostly in Prakrit between 5th-8th centuries A D While the *Bhasyas* contain informations of the life of monks and nuns, the *Churnis* give a description of the Jain history and culture

The aforesaid exegetical literature on the canon is in Prakrit, but from the 8th century, the drift towards Sanskrit is clearly visible and we get *Sanskrit* commentaries afterwards It is because the Jainas had accepted Sanskrit by that time as the language of scholarship and high learning, and this intermingling of the two currents of Sanskrit and Prakrit was beneficial to both In

this group, Haribhadra Suri (705-775 A D ) is important, who has his commentaries on *Avasyaka, Dasaveyaliya, Nandi* and *Anuyoga* Silanka Suri, Vadivetala Santi Suri, Abhayadeva Suri and others also contributed to the exegetical literature in which the commentaries on the *Avasyaka, Uttaradhyayana, Brihatkalpa Bhasya, Vyavahara Bhasya, Thananga, Bhagwati, Jambudvipaprajnpti* and *Kalpasutra* are most valuable for the reason that they record various important traditions and informations

Like the *Brahmina Puranas*, the *Jain Puranas* are available which yield some information regarding the Jain Tirthankaras, the various rulers connected with Jainism and geographical locations[39] of places which are important for our purpose The fifth and the last section known as *Vamsanucharitra* of some *Puranas* give us an account of the kings of the ruling dynasties The names of some of these kings ruling over Magadha, Anga, Avanti and Kasi etc are accepted as fairly reliable because they are partially corroborated by other literary sources [40] The important *Puranas*, related to Jainism in one way or another, are Jinasena Suri Pannata's *Harivamsapurana*[41] (783 A D ) and Gunabhadra's *Uttarapurana*[42] (9th century A D ) The *Agni Purana*[43] with other things deals with socio-economic-religious conditions of Bihar also The *Trisasthisalakapurusacaritra*[44] of Hemachandra (12th century A D ) supplies some informations of the position of Jainism during his period and before him

The *Tiloyapannati* of Vrisabha (V S 535), the *Dasabhakti* of Pujyapada (5th century A D ), the *Jayadhavala Tika* of Virasena (A D 837), the *Trilokasara* of Nemichandra (973 A D ), the *Parisisthaparvan* of Hemchandra (12th century A D ), the *Vicharasreni* and *Theravali* of Merutunga (1306 A D ) and the *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa* of Jinaprabhasuri (A D 1332) have been

utilised in sketching the position of Jainism in the region under review in between the period mentioned above

However, there are several lackings in Jain works for which these texts have not been utilised much for assessing the history of Jainism in Bihar Besides, many important texts were not composed by the scholars Among the available texts, most of them were composed in later centuries in the Southern and Western parts of India Therefore their authors did not know much about our region The rivers, hills, territories and places are not precisely located and they are rarely corroborated by other sources Sometimes, one comes to conclusion that certain places or regions are mythical ones Therefore we have to be more careful while utilising the Jain literary sources for our period and region

The foreign accounts have helped us more in getting informations regarding the position of Jainism in Bihar during the periods the travellers visited to these places The accounts of Fahien (5th century A D ) and Hiuen Tsang (7th century A D ) who toured all over Northern India are very important The accounts of Hiuen Tsang are illustrative and more exhaustive He informs that there were Nirgranthas at Vaisali and Rajgriha during his visit to eastern portion of Jambudvipa The accounts of Wang-hiuen-t's and I-tsing (both of the 7th century A D ) describe different kingdoms in this portion of eastern India Finally, the biography of the Tibetan monk Dharmaswami, who visited this portion of India in second half of the 13th century, furnishes the social and religious conditions of this area prior to, and after the Muslim invasion

Apart from the literary texts, the archaeological materials also constitute our chief source for the study of Jain religion in Bihar These include inscriptions, art and architecture and

monuments

The inscriptions found at different parts in India show the existance, development and migration of Jainism from one part to the other Jain inscriptions are bound to be sectarian, as their object is to record facts relating to the Jain religion and the Jain people, pertaining to the building of a Jain temple, installation of a Jain image, donating grants towards the maintenance of the Jain establishments or raising a memorial pillar in the name of a Jain *sadhu* who fasted upto death etc [45]

The inscriptions are public or private records engraved in most cases on stone or on copper plate Like the Jain manuscripts, most of their inscriptions are also dated A large number of them have been deciphered, edited and published in the *Epigraphy Volumes, Archaeological Survey Report, Indian Antiquary* and other collections and research journals But still a large number of them are unpublished and even unnoticed These inscriptions become more important than the literary texts from the time of Asoka and retain this position to the end of the 12th century Asoka, in his edicts, has mentioned the Nirgranthas[46], which were Svetambara Jainas He refers to Ajivikas[47] also, about whom there is great controversy The Ajivikas separated from the Jainas with Mankhaliputta Gosala as its head in 600 B C , but later on the religion was merged with Jainism again, as we don't find any reliable reference of the Ajivikas in Northern India, and especially in Bihar since the period of the Mauryas

For writing the history of Jainism in Bihar, the inscriptions from the neighbouring areas also provide valuable informations The Hathigumpha inscriptions of Kharavela show the Nandas as followers of Jain religion [48] Had this inscription not been found, we would have been in dark about the existence of king Kharavela.

The various inscriptions at Sravana Belgola make it clear that Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya died at a foot hill at that place practicing the *sallekhan* of the Jainas

We have several personal inscriptions which show the popularity of Jainism among the masses and the importance of a certain Jain *tirtha* The inscription of Pavapuri of a very late period give an idea that this place did not gain any importance during the early periods and that is why the scholars have deferred the view that Mahavira breathed his last at this place [49] After about 1000 A D, Jainism started shifting to western and southern parts of India rapidly[50] and it may be a cause why we don't find ample inscriptions in Bihar after this period

The Jain iconography is no less valuable than the Jain epigraphs for the study of Jainism in our region during the period referred to above It enables us to recognise and identify the Jinas (Jain Gods) for we can spot various marks and attributes assigned to the main Gods and associated deities and can determine their position in the hierarchy of Jain pantheon The icon bears the date and name of the sculpture which helps us fix the age and provenance of the image Iconic representation of Gods and Goddesses also indicates the change in their status

Statues of various Jain Tirthankaras have been found in different parts of Bihar of the period 300 B C to A D 1200 These are made of both stone and metal The first authentic statue of a Jain Tirthankara has been recovered from Lohanipur at Patna of the Maurya period[51] which show that the Jain images were worshipped during those times Several metal images of Tirthankaras have been recovered in recent excavations from North Bihar and Chausa in Shahabad district of South Bihar They belong to the Sunga-Kushana period according to the Iconographists

In the early days, statues of Yaksha-Yakshanıs were made wıth those of Jaın Tırthankaras, but theır ındependent statues are also found The Jaınas, ıt should be noted, had a very favourable attıtude towards the so-called malıgnant spırıts Jaınısm, wıth passıng of tımes, gradually ıncorporated and absorbed some of the salıent features of Yaksha worshıp[52]

Jaın monuments also help us ın determınıng the posıtıon of Jaınısm Several temples of Dıgambaras and Svetambaras of dıfferent ages, are found ın Bıhar (Some of the ımportant authentıc Jaın centres are shown ın Map No 1) The temples of Parasnatha, Rajgrıha and Champapurı are naturally of great ımportance The hıllocks of Sravana Belgola contaın hılls after the name of Chandragupta and Bhadrabahu, as both of them are saıd to have commıtted relıgıous suıcıde followıng Jaın practıces Several of the temples were destroyed durıng the Muhammadan ınvasıons and raıds, but some stıll remaın ın a deserted form and they narrate the trecherary of the ınvaders

The Barabar and Nagarjunı caves at Rajgrıha were dedıcated to Ajıvıka *munıs* durıng the reıgn of Asoka and Dasaratha[53] As the Ajıvıkas had almost merged wıth the Jaınas by that tıme, the caves dedıcated to the Ajıvıkas may well be taken to be those that of the Dıgambara Nırgranthas Several other evıdences have been gıven by the scholars to make ıt clear that theAjıvıkas durıng the Maurya Perıod were very much connected wıth a factıon of the Jaınas

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# THE LIFE AND WORK OF VARDHAMANA MAHAVIRA (561 B.C. - 490 B.C.)

The last Tirthankara[1] of the Jainas, Vardhamana Mahavira, is regarded as a 'great Brahman', 'a great preacher', 'a great pilot' and 'a great recluse'.[2] He really succeeded in bringing men and women of all caste and creed within his faith Though Mahavira was not the founder of this system and was only a crusader of the existing one held by a series of twentythree Tirthankaras, but it was undoubtedly he who put the teachings of Jainism on a solid footing and systematised and crystallised them as independent school of thought He left behind him not only a well knit social order of ascetics and lay followers who earnestly followed and practised what he and his immediate disciples preached Jainism took an integrated view of the totality of life, which added to its magnanimity and longivity

**Clan of Mahavira .**

'Mahavira'[3] as we know him, is not his personal name and he is better known to his contemporaries as Nigantha Nataputta [4] He was Nigantha (nirgrantha) in a liberal as well as a figurative sense - unclothed and free from all wordly ties He was called Nataputta because he was a scion of the Naya or Jnatr clan [5] As Gautam is generally referred to as the Buddha Jina came to be a popular name of Rsabha and other Tirthankaras, and their adherents began to be called 'Jainas' The Pali *Nikayas*[6] mention

'Nirgantha' in place of Jain The term 'Nigrantha' for a Jain came to be used perhaps along with the origin of Jainism itself

Mahavira's father Siddhartha of 'Kasyapa' gotra[7] belonged to the clan of 'jnati kshatriyas' and that is why Mahavira was known as Jnataputra in his own days In Pali for 'Jnati ' the word 'nata' is used and thus in Buddhist literature he is referred to as Nataputta[8] In Prakrit 'nata' is distorted as 'naya' and this is how he is referred to 'Nayaputta' in *Kalpasutra* as well as *Uttaradhyayana Sutras* The Buddhist and Jain literatures make it clear that Mahavira was born in 'Naya', 'Nata' or 'Jnatri' clan and as Buddha is called 'Sakyaputra' after the scion of his clan, so was Mahavira called 'Nataputta' because he was a scion of the 'Nata' clan

There is one caste called 'Jatharia' in the Vaisali region even nowadays Rahul Sankrityayana[9] is of the view that the word Jatharia is a modern and distorted name of Jnatr[10], a clan to which Mahavira belonged

But some scholars have not accepted the aforesaid view, as they do not find the Jethariya community in the region of Vaisali before the advent of the Muslims[11] Besides the word Jetharia cannot be a distorted form of Jnatri from the philological point of view[12]

**Birth and Parentage :**

Mahavira belonged to the Kasyapagotra of Kshatriya clan[13] His father Siddhartha[14], known as Sreyamsa and Yasamsa or Yasasvi[15] seems to have been a chieftain of Kundagrama village of the town of Vaisali, nearly fifty kilometers north of Patna His mother Trisala, who is called as Videhadatta and Priyakarini[16], was a beautiful, meritorious, loving and virtuous lady, and is said to have possessed all the good qualities of the

head and heart[17] In the Svetambara *sastras*[18], she is spoken of as sister to Kataka (Chetaka), the powerful ruler of Videha, who belonged to the Vasistha gotra In the Digambara scriptures, she is called as daughter of Chetaka[19], the king of Siddhadesha It is not known whether these two Chetakas are the same or different persons But when we see the list of other sisters of Trisala[20], who have also been called daughters of king Chetaka, we come to a definite conclusion that the name of her father was Chetaka

**Change of Embryo .**

Some Svetambara works contain a very interesting incident regarding the birth of Mahavira It is said that Mahavira was first going to be born of Brahmin mother Devananda[21], but through the intervention of the king of Gods Sakra (Indra), an embryonic transfer was accomplished[22] and he was born of a Ksatriya mother, named Trisala[23] It happened like this because Tirthankaras should never be born in 'poor Brahmin families'[24] This story shows the bias view of the Jainas against the Brahman and their preference for the Ksatriyas A Brahmin mother was not worthy enough to give birth to a Tirthankara[25]

The *Bhagavati Sutra*[26] gives a story related to Mahavira's original parents, Devananda and Usavadatta, who had come to meet Mahavira when the latter had become famous as a preacher after getting the omniscense This meeting took place at the Brahmanical part of Kundagrama On seeing Mahavira, milk began to flow from the breasts of Devananda due to her motherly love for him which was a natural human trait of a mother for her son When enquired by Gautam, his chief disciple, Mahavira accepted that he was the son of Devananda These original parents of Mahavira, as the story goes on, accepted the order of their Jain son This may be one of the causes of his having Brahmin disciples

It seems that Siddhartha had two wives, the Brahmin, Devananda, and the Kshatriyani, Trisala. The name Usavdatta or Risabhadatta has been invented by the Jainas to prove him as the husband of Devananda Siddhartha, through his marriage with Trisala, became connected with persons of high rank within and outside his region It was, therefore, profitable, if not probable, to give out that Mahavira was the son, and not merely the son of Trisala, for the reason that he should be entitled to the patronage of her relations This legend also proves the Jain's preference for Kshatriya rather than for Brahmanas[27] The *Bhagvati Sutra* does not mention the change of the embryo and states Devananda to be Mahavira's mother It is rightly assumed, after consideration, that Risabhadatta and Devananda were the original parents of Mahavira, but Siddhartha and Trisala might have adopted Mahavira

The story of transfer of embryo seems to have been borrowed from the Vaisnava devotional story of the transfer of embryo of Krishna from the womb of Devaki to that of Rohini[28] because the tradition of Mahavira's birth from a Kshatriya couple goes back to and before the beginning of Christian era, when Jainism was firmly established in India and had assumed a thoroughly anti-Brahmanical stance as it is depicted in one of the Mathura sculptures[29] Buhler[30] points out and confirms that four mutilated statues of Mathura museum refer to the legend of the transfer of embryo Two of these figures are goat headed males and two are females, each holding an infant in a dish[31] This infant is no other than Tirthankara Mahavira

Three names of Mahavira have been recorded in the ancient texts-Vardhamana[32], Sraman[33] and Mahavira[34] The legends show that as the family treasure of gold, silver, jewel etc went on increasing since the prince was placed in the womb of Trisala, he was named Vardhamana (the increasing one) This name was

given to him by his parents[35] As he remained constantly engaged in austerities with spontaneous happiness, he was called 'Sramana' by the people and as he was not afraid of fears and dangers, he was called 'Mahavira' by the gods[36] But his civil name is 'Vardhamana', the prospering one, which in the texts, however, is interpreted as the promoter[37]

**Birth Place :**

Both the Digambara[38] and Svetambara[39] scriptures agree that Kundapura or Kundagrama was the birth place of Mahavira The Acharanga Sutra[40] the Sutrakritanga[41], the Kalpasutra[42], the Uttaradhyayana Sutra[43] and the Bhagavati Sutra Tika[44] have ample materials to show that Jainism had a great stronghold in Vaisali Kundapura area of the Videha country and Mahavira had great attachment to this region In the Jain *Sutras*, Mahavira is also called Visalie or Vaisalika[45] which means a native of Vaisali or the first citizen of Vaisali A good number of European as well as Indian scholars and historians[46] are unanimous in accepting Kundapura or Kundagrama near Vaisali as the birth place of Mahavira We won't go in details of their opinions and theories, but one thing is without doubt that all these scholars accept Kundagrama or Kundapura of Vaisali, as the birth place of Mahavira

The gradual decline of Vaisali began from the seventh century A D[47] and the Jainas came to forget the birth place of the last Tirthankar[48] Hiuen Tsang (A D 629-645) who visited Vaisali, says that the followers of the Niganthas were very numerous[49] Asaga of the eleventh Vikrama century mentions Kundapura but does not say that it was in Videha

Some Digambara Jain works[50] place Vaisali in Sindhu-Vishaya or Sindhu-Desh They called Tirbhukti 'Sindhu-Vishaya' Evidently however, Vaisali was not situated in Sindhu Sauvira K P Jain[51] suggests two reasons for this confusion According to him, the

authors have misunderstood Vrijjidesa[52] for the Sindhudesa Ujjaini in Avanti was also called Visala[53] and as Sindhu-river was in the adjoining territory, it was called Sindhu-desa in the middle ages (8th-15 centuries A D ) Since the writers of the Digambara sect lived mostly in the Ujjaini region, they may have confused Ujjayini (also called Visala) with the Visala, little knowing that another Visala, different from their own, existed in Eastern India

There had been attempts to prove other places in Bihar as the birth place of Mahavira in stead of Kundapura in Vaisali The Digambara Jainas located a place called Kundalpura near Nalanda, while the Svetambaras brought in light Kshatriyakunda near the village Lachhwad or Lachhuar in South Monghyr and declared it to be the birth place of the last Tirthankara Later on, these places were regarded sacred by both the communities respectively But Jain scholars like Vijayendra Suriji[54] and Kalyan Vijayji Gani[55] have placed certain strong reasons which shatter the views of recognising the birth place of Mahavira either at Kundalpura or at Kshatriyakunda

The Kshatriyakunda formed a part of Anga and not of Videha Modern Kshtriyakunda is situated on the mountain while there is no reference to mountains in connection with Kshatriyakunda or Kundalpura in the Jain scriptures In the ancient Jain scriptures, Kshatriyakunda is shown near Vaisali, while there is no place called Vaisali near Kshatriyakunda-Lichhuad Near the present Kshatriya Kunda of South Monghyr, no traces of such ancient places as Vaisali, Vanijyagrama[56], Kollage-Sannivesa[57] and Karmaragrama[58] are found Near the present Kshatriyakunda, there is a *nala*, but it is not Gandaki The river Gandaki flows near Vaisali even today and it must be flowing much nearer to Basarh during those days

Kalyanvijayji[59], while argueing mainly on geographical grounds, has shown that there was no necessity of crossing the Ganges after coming from the Svetavika, which was west of Videha, in order to reach Rajgriha But one has not to cross the river Ganges in coming to Rajgriha from both the places Kundalpura or Kshatriyakunda, as both these places lie on the southern side of the river Ganges

Professor Yogendra Mishra[60] has shown close association of Mahavira and Jainism with Vaisali-Kundapura of the Videha country According to him, Mahavira was born at Kundapura or Kundagrama which was in Videha and because of it, he was called Videha, Videhadatta, Videhajatya and Videhasukumara[61] He was also called Vesalie[62] (i e a citizen of Vaisali, Vaisaliya or Vaisalika) because of the close proximity of Vaisali and Kundapura He passed thirty years of his early life in Videha before the renunciation of the world[63] and twelve rainy seasons of his ascetic life at Vaisali Vanijyagrama[64] After the death of Mahavira the nine Mallas, nine Lichchavis and eighteen Ganarajas of Kasi-Kosala celebrated a festival by lightening earthen pots It is significant that the Magadhas and the Angas are conspicuous here by their non-participation in this festival

A seal of Gupta period was found in Vaisali with the legend Vesalinamakunda Kumaramatyadhikarna (sya)[66] The *kunda* which has been referred to in this seal was only Kshatriyakunda, because no other *kunda* in the area is otherwise known

According to another view as Mahavira delivered his sermons in Ardha-Magadhi, he might have been born at Lichhaur But this view is also contradicted on the ground that Ardha-Magadhi was a language of more than twentyfive Aryan countries[67] Ardha-Magadhi and Brahmi were popular throughout the country[68] Lord

Buddha was a 'sakyan', even then he preached in Magadhai [69] Thus the birth place of Mahavira cannot be fixed on mere language ground

According to V A Smith, in about 1892 A D two statues of Jain Tirthankaras, one seated and the other standing, were discovered about eight feet below the surface, five hundred yards west of Baniya[70] (the present Vaisali)

We have several references to Jaina antiquities in Vaisali and its suburb in the Jain literature The *Uvasagadasao*[71] says that the *Jnatrikas* possessed a Jain temple outside their settlement at Kollaga, bearing the name Dinapalasacaitya *Caitya* is the term used for Jain temple, which, according to Hoernle, means "properly the name of a Jain temple or sacred shrine, but commonly applied to the whole sacred enclosure, containing a garden, grove or park, a shrine and attendant's houses "[72] This religious establishment might have been kept up for the accomodation of Mahavira on his periodical visists along with his disciples to Kundapura or Vaisali [73] The above facts thus clearly show that Vaisali was the residence of Mahavira and the discovery of images and coins strongly confirm the identification suggested by the name During the present time, a certain section of the Svetambaras and the Digambaras appear to accept Vaisali to be the birth place of Mahavira Swami[74] and they throng in thousands every year at the annual festival of Vaisali organised on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Mahavira

**Early Life of Mahavira :**

In person, Mahavira seems to be handsome and impressive He was clever and was possessed of a very keen intellect[75] The *Kalpasutra* mentions that from his very birth, he possessed 'supreme, unlimited and unimpeded knowledge and intution' [76] We may assume

that he received the usual education and training of a Kshatriya aristocrat in literature and philosophy, in military and administrative sciences and in music and fine arts

On the question of Mahavira's marriage, there is a fundamental difference between the Digambara and the Svetambara accounts The Digambara works[77] vehemently deny Mahavira's marriage and say that he led the life of Brahamachari [78] But the Svetambara accounts[79] clearly state that he married Yasoda, daughter of Simhavarman, king of Kaundinyapura [80]

According to the Svetambara story, Mahavira in his youth, took to contemplation and began to entertain plans of renunciation and to his parents resolved to turn his mind and solve the problem by marrying him off He was then married to Yasoda,[81] otherwise known as Videhadatta and Priyakarani, a Kshatriya lady of Kaundinya *gotra* In course of time queen Yasoda bore a daughter, Anojja or Priyadarsana [82] When she grew young, she was married to Jamali The fact that Mahavira's son-in-law was Jamali is given in a few late works [83] It is strange that although this person is prominently mentioned many a time in the original canon, nothing has been said about his marriage with Priyadarsana The child of Priyadarsana and Jamali (Mahavira's grand daughter), who belonged to the Kausika *gotra*[84] had two names being known both as Sesavati and Yasovati [85]

The Digambara traditions[86], which keep Mahavira unmarried, have used the word 'Kumar' and this has perhaps caused the controversy The Digambara traditions interpret 'Kumar' as unmarried and so they claim Mahavira to be unmarried But the word Kumara is frequently used for a prince as well [87] So, the Svetambara traditions say that Mahavira became an ascetic while he was still a prince (that he did not accept the throne) In such a confused condition,

we have a good deal of evidence to accept the fact of Mahavira's marriage, however distasteful it may appear to a Digambara Jain

**Renunciation :**

Neither the marriage, nor the birth of the baby, nor even the greed for the throne, could keep Mahavira bound up with the worldly chains In his thirtieth year[88], after the decease of his parents, he left his home for a lonely forest, called Gnatrishanda or Jnatrkhandavana[89], which was situated near his home town His elder brother, Nandi Vardhana[90] and his sister, Sudarsana[91], were there, but they apparently did not try to prevent Mahavira from embracing an entirely new life [92]

It seems that Mahavira first joined the order of Parsvanatha, of which his parents were lay followers [93] The Digambaras believe that Mahavira abandoned clothes at the very time of his initiation, whereas the Svetambaras hold that he abandoned them after thirteen months [94] With supreme knowledge, intuition, conduct, valour, uprightness, mildness, dexterity, patience, freedom from passions, control, contemtment and understanding, Mahavira meditated for twelve years[95] on the supreme path to final liberation, which is the fruit of veracity, control, penance and good conduct [96] The period of twelve years and full six months[97], spent in meditation, was not fruitless, for in the thirteenth year, Mahavira, at least, attained the supreme knowledge (kevala jnana)[98] and final emancipation from the bonds of pleasure and pain Henceforth, properly called Mahavira, or Great Hero, this victorious ascetic roamed about, giving away to the people the fruits of his enlightenment and showing them the right path, for long thirty years

**Meeting with Gosala :**

An important event of the period of ascetic life of Mahavira was his meeting with Gosala Mankhaliputta, the head of the Ajivika

sect[99] Though several stories have been given about the family and life of Mankhaliputra, but the fifth Anga of the Jainas, commonly known as the *Bhagavati Sutra*[100], gives us a fairly connected and detailed account of the life of Gosala There were many other ascetics of Ajivikism before Mankhaliputra Gosala and he considered himself to be the twentyfourth Tirthankara of the current Avasarpini age[101] But he is nowhere found in Hindu Sanskrit literature except as a doubtful shadowy figure in the *Mahabharat* called Manki[102] who represents a corrupt and distorted recollection of the historical Makkhali or Mankhaliputra[103] The Tamil sources give his name as Markali He is variously known in Buddhist Sanskrit literature as Maskarin Gosala[104], Gosalikaputra[105], Gosaliputta[106] and Moghapurusa[107] It appears that Mankhali, the father of Gosala, was a poor, wandering poet or bard, who earned his livelihood by singing old, heroic, ballads and by exibiting pictures *(cittaphalaga)* connected with his songs[108] The other name Gosala, he received from the circumstances of having been born in a cowshed (Gosala) of a rich Brahman, called Gobahula, in which his parents, failing to obtain any other refuge during a certain rainy season, had taken shelter[109]

He was born at Saravana near Sravasti and brought up in Kosala and his headquarters were situated in the Kosalan capital (Sravasti), where he was chiefly respected[110] About Gosala's early life, before his meeting with Mahavira, the *Bhagavati Sutra* tells us that he maintained himself by profession of a *mankha,* with a picture board in his hand[111] It further appears that from the very beginning of his career he developed some sort of repugnance to wordly life

From the accounts given in the *Bhagavati Sutra* it is known that during the second year of his ascetic life, Mahavira stayed at Nalanda during the rainy season Gosala Mankhaliputra, who

was also wandering in the same area, took shelter in the same shed in which Mahavira was staying Owing to Mahavira's extraordinary self restraint and deep sense of meditation, a rich householder, Vijaya of Rajgriha, showered all hospitality upon him Gosala, who had learnt much about Mahavira by then, became so much impressed with Mahavira's way of life that he expressed his willingliness to become his disciple But his request fell flat [112]

His two subsequent prayers for admission into his sect were similarly rejected by Mahavira

Mahavira then went to the settlement of Kollaga, near Nalanda,[113], and was greeted there by the Brahmin Bahula Gosala did not give up his attempts to become his disciple and so he too proceeded to the adjoining areas of Rajgriha to find out Mahavira Being disapointed, he came back to his old shed and led a life of an ascetic by giving away his clothes, vessels and shoes to a Brahmin He shaved off his hair and beards and continued his wanderings in search of Mahavira He succeeded in meeting him at Paniyabhumi[114] where he again prayed for his admission into his new and inspiring sect His prayer had the desired effect and consequently Mahavira and Gosala lived together for six years in Paniyabhumi practising asceticism [115]

The *Bhagavati Sutra* then informs us that during the season of *Sarada,* both Mahavira and Gosala left Siddhattagrama for Kurmaragrama Siddharthagrama is probably the same as Siddhathagama in the Birbhum district (now in West Bengal) [116] The story goes that they passed through a flourishing 'seasumum' shrub where Gosala asked Mahavira to the possibility of the shrub bearing fruit [117] Having received an affirmative reply from Mahavira[118], Gosala felt that Mahavira was a liar He then uprooted the plant and threw it away But a shower of rain at the moment

made the plant take root again[119]

After a few days, Gosala found that the *seasum* clusters had come up on their foot again The revival of the plant made such deep impression upon him that he jumped to the conclusion that all plants as well as living beings were capable of reanimation *(Pauttaparihar avada)*[120]

The doctrines of Gosala were based on a central principle of *Niyativada*[121] He had a 'belief in the all embracing rule of the principle of order, *Niyati,* which ultimately controlled every action and phenomenon It leaves no room for man's free will All beings *(satva),* life, *(prana),* substance *(bhuta)* and existence *(jiva)* are caused by fate[122] Such determination left no room for any human effort, which becomes ineffectual[123]

His theory of reanimation and other doctrines did not find favour with Mahavira who believed in the freedom of the will Gosala, then, served his association with Mahavira[124], and declared himself a Jina at Sravasti But Mahavira had to wait for another six years for attaining the stage of perfection

Barua[125] says that the Jainas have a biased view against Gosala, but it cannot be relied upon He says that Gosala became teacher at least two years before Mahavira and he predeceased Mahavira by some sixteen years The *Bhagavati* and *Kalpasutras* do not give similar account of Gosala's life While the former says that Mahavira spent six years in Paniyabhumi with Gosala, the latter gives him only one year for that place, but six years for Mithila This contradictory accounts reveal one thing that in the second year of his monkhood, Mahavira left the religious order of Parsvanatha (which he was following uptill then) and sect of Gosala, but when differences of opinions forced them to separate for ever, he founded a new school of his own and organised a religious order almost

based upon Parsvanatha's model

But this view of Barua appears to be only imaginary and is not supported by any solid dependable evidence We have clear proof to show that Mahavira, from the beginning of his ascetic life, was a Jain monk and he never shifted to any other religious order of that period The Jain Svetambara literature clearly says that Mahavira was the 'guru' of Gosala [126] The Jain scriptures also state that Gosala's system was taken from the eight *mahanimittas,* a portion of the Purvas These Purvas or originals were believed to be the original sacred texts taught by Mahavira himself to his disciples [127] Even Gosala, while dying, had accepted, besides other things, that he was the disciple of the Lord (Mahavira) He repented at the last hours for the errors he had done against Mahavira and thought that really Mahavira was the true Jina and not he himself [128]

**Kevaljyana and First Sermon or Discourse :**

Mahavira attained supreme enlightenment at the age of fourtytwo, in the thirteenth year of his renunciation The event took place on the tenth day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Vaisakha* on the north bank of the river Rijupalika or Rituvalika under a *Sala* tree [129] This place was situated in the village Jambhiyagama

**Location of the Place Jambhiyagama :**

A question about the exact location of Jambhiyagama or Jrimbhikagrama (in Sanskrit) has been haunting the scholars since long J C Jain[130] thinks that the place must be located somewhere in the region around modern Pavapuri in Nalanda district Mrs S Stevenson[131] says that "Mahavira stayed in a place not far from Parasnatha hills called Jrimbhikagrama " Muni Kalyanvijayji[132] understands that it was a flourishing "town strewn with tall

ramparts and high buildings" He identifies it with Jambhigaon near Damodar in the Hazaribagh district [133]

The theory that Jrimbhikagrama was near Pavapuri in Nalanda has several defects The Jain texts[134] say that Mahavira got enlightenment on the bank of the river Rijupalika [135] But at present, there is no river in the locality of Pavapuri which can be identified with the ancient Rijupalika Secondly, Pavapuri, at that time, was not famous and pious for the Jains

Now, if we take Jambhigaon on Damodar river, the identification seems to be authentic, because we find many references of Jain asectics moving round about the Parasnath hill and so it would be no wonder it Mahavira also went there to attain Kevalahood The Parasanatha hill was also a sacred place owing to the tradition of the *nirvana* of Parsvanatha

The river Rijupalika[136] has been identified with the river Barakar [137] N L Dey[138] says that in a modern temple on the bank of the Barakar, twelve kilometers away from Giridih, there is an inscription which seems to mention the name of the river Rijupalika At present, Jambhigaon is on the bank of river Damodar but we don't find any similarity between the name Damodar and Rijupalika

Wilford[139] identifies Damodar with the Vedasmrti or the Vedavati He says that Damodar is known by the name of Devananda in it upper course [140] If the same river is there, it is nothing imaginary or fantastic that the portion of this river, passing by the side of Jrimbhikagrama, was known as Rijupalika during 600 B C

**Discourses of Mahavira :**

Mahavira thus acquired, at modern Jambhigaon, the perfect knowledge, which was infinite, supreme, unobstructed and full [141]

It was at this stage that he was recognised as Vira[142] (the victor), Mahavira[143] (the great victor), Kevalin[144] (the omniscient) and Arhat (the perfect) [145] After this, he went from place to place for the propagation of his doctrine and for making converts

After the realisation of *Kevaljnana* or supreme knowledge, a religious conference *(Samavasarana)* was convened on the bank of the river Ujjuvaliya, but this discourse of Mahavira remained unsuccessful A second religious conference was held at Majjhima Pava[146] in the garden of Mahasena, where a prolonged discussion on various religious and philosophical points led eleven learned Brahmanas to embrace Jainism Those Brahmanas had gone there to attend the great sacrifice which was being performed by a rich Brahmin named Somila

But according to the Digambara scriptures, Mahavira, after obtaining supreme knowledge, wandered silently for sixtysix days and then reached Rajgriha near Vipulachala, where he delivered his first religious discourse on his new sect It was at this place where he converted the eleven learned *Brahmans*, including Indrabhuti Gautam, who subsequently became one of his chief disciples [147] These disciples were called 'Ganadharas' because they are said to have been well versed in the twelve *Angas*, the fourteen *Purvas* and the whole *Ganipidaga* (the basket of the Ganis) [148]

About these eleven Ganadharas, one significant fact is that they all were Brahmans which clearly show that ideological revolution was taking place among them and forcing them to give up their traditional grooves of thoughts advocating ritualism Further, it was this intelligentsia that predominantly included the *Brahmanas* who helped him in spreading his doctrines Even though he advocated the doctrine of spiritual democracy, declaring open the doors of his order for all classes and castes, it was the intelligentsia,

spurred by the firmness of conviction, and equipped to propound the new faith with convincing arguments, that accounted for major appeal to Mahavira

**Last Thirty Years of Mahavira's Life : his Wanderings :**

The last thirty years of Mahavira were passed in teaching his religious system, organising order of ascetics and wandering about preaching his doctrines and making converts Mahavira wandered about in Bihar and some parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bengal in the course of his missionary activities which commenced after the attainment of *kevaljnana* [149] The *Vrhatakalpasutra* states that while at Saketa (Ayodhya), Mahavira told his disciples that they were permitted to go only upto Magadha in the east, Kausambi in the south, Sthaneshwar or Sthuna in the west and Kunala (Sravasti) in the north, as only these areas were Aryakshetra [150]

Most of the rainy seasons he spent round about the native towns of Vaisali, Rajgriha (the old capital of Magadha), Champa (the capital of ancient Anga), Mithila (the kingdom of Videha) and Sravasti [151]

The *Kalpasutra*[152] gives the names of the places where Mahavira stayed during the rainy seasons after renouncing the world Mahavira spent the first rainy season in Asthikagrama, three in Champa and Pristha Champa, twelve in Vaisali and Vanijyagrama, fourteen in Rajgriha and suburb of Nalanda, six in Mithila, two in Bhadrika, one in Alabhika, one in Paniyabhumi, one in Sravasti and the last one in the town of Pava, in king Hastipala's office But the *Kalpasutra*[153] does not mention separately the respective period of rainy seasons actually spent by Mahavira at these places Though we have itinerary of Mahavira exhaustively and chronologically in the late Jain works, it does not seem to be correct fully On

the basis of these Jain and Buddhist texts, Mahavira's thirty rainy seasons which he spent at different places seem to be like this

| *Year of passing rainy season* | *Place of Passing rainy season* |
|---|---|
| 1 | Rajgriha |
| 2 | Vaisali |
| 3 | Vanijyagrama |
| 4 | Rajgriha |
| 5 | Vanijyagrama |
| 6 | Rajgriha |
| 7 | Rajgriha |
| 8 | Vaisali |
| 9 | Vaisali |
| 10 | Rajgriha |
| 11 | Vanijyagrama |
| 12 | Rajgriha |
| 13 | Rajgriha |
| 14 | Champa |
| 15 | Mithila |
| 16 | Vanijyagrama |
| 17 | Rajgriha |
| 18 | Vanijyagrama |
| 19 | Vaisali |
| 20 | Vaisali |
| 21 | Rajgriha |
| 22 | Nalanda |
| 23 | Vaisali |
| 24 | Vaisali |
| 25 | Rajgriha |
| 26 | Nalanda |

| | |
|---|---|
| 27 | Mithila |
| 28 | Mithila |
| 29 | Rajgriha |
| 30 | Majjhima Pava |

This list strengthens the Digambara view that the place which Mahavira loved best of all was Rajgriha, the capital of Magadha[154] at that time Besides it also shows that in the beginning, Jainism made its base strong only in Bihar and its adjoining areas

**Four Orders of the Jain Community :**

Mahavira, during his life time, not only organised a systematic religion and philosophy, but also a well knit social order of ascetics and lay followers, who earnestly followed and practised what he and his immediate disciples preached He is considered to be a great organiser and due to his beautiful personality and skilll, he attracted a large number of people, both men and women, to be his disciples From them, therefore grew the four orders of his community[155] viz monks nuns, laymen and laywomen, which greatly strengthened the structure of his organisation

Mahavira gathered an excellent community of fourteen thousand monks and placed them under the charge of Indrabhuti [156] He resolved to combat by regulations and organisation those special temptations and dangers which beset ascetics in their wandering life For it, he divided fourteen thousand monks into nine schools called *Ganas* and placed each school under the headship of one of his chief disciples or *ganadharas* The *Ganadharas*, according to their rank, had two hundred and fifty to five hundred monks under him These teachers guided and instructed separate groups of Nirgranthas

The women followers, some thirtysix thousand, actually renounced the world and became nuns and at their head was

Chandana[157] or Chandanabala, the first cousion of Mahavira or, as other accounts have it, his aunt

His third order consisted of devout laymen or Sravakas, numbering about one hundred and fiftynine thousand with Sankha Sataka at their head [158] These laymen only followed the five *anuvratas* and did not renounce the world The similarities of religious duties of monks and laymen brought about their close union The laymen could enjoy the life of a monk without renouncing the world Mrs Stevenson rightly points out ' these two organisations gave the Jaina a root in India that the Buddhists never obtained, and that root firmly planted amongst the laity enabled Jainism to withstand the storm that drove Buddhism out of India "[159]

The fourth order consisted of devout laywomen or *Sravikas*, numbering about three hundred and fiftyeight thousand with Sulasa and Revati at their heads [160] These women did their household works but served the ascetics in many ways Besides, there were three hundred sages, who knew the fourteen Purvas[161], thirteen hundred sages who were possessed of the Avadhi knowledge and superior qualities,[162] seven hundred *kevalins* who possessed the combined best knowledge and intuition,[163] seven hundred sages who could transform themselves,[164] five hundred sages of mighty intellect, acquainted with all the thoughts and feelings of all sentient beings, in two and a half continents and two seas,[165] four hundred disputants who had never been overcome in any assembly of gods, *asuras* or men,[166] seven hundred men and fourteen hundred female disciples, who on dying, obtained perfect liberation[167] and eight hundred sages in their last birth, who were happy as regards their station, existence and future [168] Though the number of the members of Jain community, mentioned in the Jain text, seems exaggerated, in proportion to the population of the country of that period, but it is symbolic that Mahavira

converted a large number of people to Jainism

**The Popularity of Jainism in the Region of Bihar :**

Mahavira, first of all, wanted to attract those householders who were only to observe certain rules of conduct and really he got success in it The lay disciples and supporters of Mahavira were noted for their piety and devotion Their contemporaries, including kings and princes, consulted them in many affairs and matters [169] The Jain literatures mention a number of very rich householders, merchants, guild president and common people, who were *Sramanopasaka* Among them Ananda and his wife, Sivananda, of Vanijyagrama[170] Kamadeva and his wife, Bhadra, of Champa,[171] Chulanipriya and his wife, Syama,[172] Suradeva and his wife Dhanya of Varanasi,[173] Chullasataka and his wife, Pushya, Kundakolita and his wife, from Kampilyapura, Sardalaputra and his wife, Agnimitra, from Polasapur, Brahmin Bahula of Kollaga[174] Somila of Vanijyagrama[175] Mahasataka from Rajgriha, Nandipriya and his wife, Asvini, Salatipriya and his wife Phalguni, Rsabhadatta, Devananda of Brahmanakunda grama[176] Pingalaka[177] and Skandaka[178] of Sravasti Migara of Sravasti and Vesiyayana[179] of Kummagama, were the most well known disciples of Tirthankara Mahavira

The *Upalisutra*[180] mentions a lay disciple of Mahavira named Upali from Nalanda who was a liberal supporter of the recluses of his order, both male and female We are told that a very large number of the inhabitants of Balakagrama[181] became lay disciples of Mahavira The *Bhagvati Sutra* speaks of two other rich householders, Vijaya[182] and Sudarsana[183] among the lay disciples of Mahavira, of these the former was an inhabitant of Rajgriha

Jainism not only remained among rich bankers and merchants, but even the contemporary kings, queens, princes and ministers became lay disciples of Mahavira His personal connections with

the various rulers were through his mother, the Lichchavi princess, Trisala, and his maternal uncle, Chetaka, the king of Vaisali

According to the Jain scriptures, Kings like Srenika[184] (Bimbisara), Kunika[185] (Ajatasatru), Chetaka[186], Pradyota[187], Satanika[188], Dadhivahana[189], Udayana[190], Kasivardhana[191] and Jitasatru[192] were his followers

Among the queens, Prabhavati of Udayana[193], queens of king Srenika and Pradyot[194] and princesses like Chandana[195], daughter of the king of Champa, followed Jainism Among princes, names of Meghakumara, Nandisena, Abhayakumara, Halla and Vihalla of Magadha and Sinhabhadra of Vaisali, may be mentioned as the followers of the cult propagated by Mahavira The royal patronage facilited the spread of Jainism in the areas under review

Mahavira visited a few kingdoms and places within Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh and that's why the Jain religion became so popular and static in these areas In these places, the rulers themselves accepted his order, patronised it, and encouraged their subjects to follow the path of the ascetic Mahavira Among such rulers, the name of king Srenik-Bimbisara figures in the Jain texts with utmost respect and he has been described as an admirer of Mahavira He is chiefly called by the name of Seniya or Senia in the Jain canonical texts, although the name Bimbisara (Bhambhasara) is not entirely unknown [196] The *Uttaradhyayana Sutra*[197] mentions him visiting Mahavira at a *caitya* with his wives, servants and relations His father was also a supporter of the Parsvanatha sect [198] Hemchandra has shown his wife Chellana worshipping Vardhaman Mahavira [199] On one occasion, Srenik is said to have issued a proclamation promising financial help to the relatives of those who entered the Jain holy order [200] His son Kunika or Ajatasatru too had a cordial relation with Mahavira.[201]

The ruler of Vaisali, Chetaka, who was a brother of Ksatriya Trisala, is represented in later texts as a devotee of Mahavira He had seven daughters and he got them all married in royal families and these princesses, as has been said, were instrumental in the propagation of Jainism in Northern India [202]

The parents of Mahavira were followers of Parsva and they observed the principles of Jainism

Mahavira visited the towns within the kingdom of king Jiyasattu (Jitasatru, the conqueror of enemies) [203] He seems to be no other than Pasendi or Prasenjit of Kosala [204] He might have been influenced by the teachings of Mahavira[205], as we have clear evidence of a dialogue between Kesi, a staunch Jain and the King [206] The Varanasi people[207] recognised that the new sect was a continuation of the one founded by a former prince of their own city

In the *Bhagavati Sutra*, Mahavira has also been shown visiting Kausambi and Sravasti [208] It was at Kausambi that he delivered his religious discourse in the assembly of Jayanti, her nephew king Udayana and his mother Mrgavati His discourse at Sravasti is important as it was this place, where Mahavira revealed the incident of the birth of Gosala Mankhaliputra in the assembly of his followers [209]

Though it is certain that the religion was in a flourishing state during this period, one is confronted with an extra rarity of Jain monuments and antiquities, not only of this period, but also of the earlier one in Bihar which was so closely associated with Mahavira

But such observation appears fishy because the tradition of statue worship had not started by that period and so lack of remains of Jain monuments was also natural [210]

During the period of Mahavira, Jain religion became one of the major religious sects of Eastern India and it became almost as popular as, or sometimes more popular than, the religion founded by Gautam Buddha This is proved also by the fact that where as the Buddhist canonical writers took so much trouble in mentioning repeatedly Nataputta and his followers, the Jain counterparts virtually took no notice of the Buddha and his monks However, it was only later on, in Jain commentaries, that the Jain writers mention the Buddha and his followers

**Nirvana of Mahavira :**

It has generally been accepted by almost all the scholars that Mahavira died at the age of seventyone years and six and a half months A Svetambara legend tells thus "On the seventh day of his stay at this place, the Lord took his seat upon a diamond throne in the centre of a magnificent hall, which had been specially built for him on the borders of a lake " His hearers had arranged themselves into twelve grades, according to their rank, for all were there, from the king to the beggar It was a dark night but the hall was brilliantly illuminated by the supernatural glow issued from the Gods who had come to listen to the illustrious preacher [211] Mahavira preached whole night and towards dawn his hearers fell asleep The saint knew by his *sukladhyayana* that his end was drawing night, so he sat with clasped hands and crossed kness[212] and just as the morning dawned, he attained *nirvana* on the day of Kartika Krishna fourteen [213] Mahavira is said to have delivered the fiftyfive lectures that explain the results of *Karma* and recited the thirtysix[214] unasked questions in the night of his *nirvana* [215]

**Location of the Place of Nirvana :**

There are controversies with regard to the exact identification of the place where Mahavira breathed his last While Jacobi[216]

and others think that Mahavira's *nirvana* took place at the traditional Pavapuri of Bihar,[217] there are others who differ from this view and have tried to locate it somewhere else in Eastern U P [218] These scholars have identified Pava, with modern Fazilnagar in Deoria district, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, to have been the place Those who are of this view, appear to have relied upon the Jain and Buddhist sources, and the archaeological evidences to support their arguments

**The Place Pava**

Names like Apapa, Majjhima Pava, Papa and Pava, have been given for this place According to Jinaprabhasuri, it was called Papa before the *nirvana* of Mahavira, but later on, was named Apapa, the sinless *puri* or habitation - elided and corrupted in the common people's language to Pavapuri [219] The Jain texts call it Majjhima or Madhayama Pava, which is the central part of the place According to some scholars, there were three Pavas during that period and Mahavira died at the Middle Pava Among these, the first Pava was near Kusinagar in modern U P [220], second in Nalanda District in Bihar[221], and the third, either near Mirzapur in U P , or somewhere in South Bihar [222] But definite evidences lack to prove the existence of the second and third Pavas

Three causes have been given for not recognising the Sathiaon-Fazilnagar Pava (which is near Kusinagar in U P ) to be the ancient and real Pava Accordingly, Mahavira died at Pavapuri and not at Pavanagar, he died at Majjhima Pava, and that Sathian-Fazilnagar Pava belongs to the Buddhists and not to the Jainas

Now, we should try to probe into the doubts in the back ground of the existing situation and circumstances

The various names, Apapa, Pava, Pavapuri, Pavanagar and Majjihima Pava indicate only one place [223] Had it not been a

fact, the 'Nirvana Bhakti' would never have mentioned Pavapuri and Pavanagar for the same place The author might be knowing the differences between Pavapuri and Pavanagar Majjhima Pava was not another Pava, rather it was named Majjhima due to its position in the middle of the Pava Separate Pavas for the Buddhists and for the Jains is nothing but a false imagination The contemporary literary sources mention of only one Pava Had it not been the case, they would certainly have mentioned North Pava, South Pava and Majjhima Pava

**Mahavira's death at Hastipala's Office :**

Mahavira spent his last rainy season in the office of the king Hastipala of Papa of Majjhima Pava[224] But we have no knowledge of the reign and place of the seat of this king During those days, the head of any republican state was called 'Raja'[225] and if we take the word 'Raja' as synonym to the word 'king', it obviously follows that the reign where Mahavira died, was a republican one

Now the question arises as to where was the seat of this king If we take king Ajatasatru to have been king Hastipala or Hatthipala, there is not cogent evidence to establish this proposition, and at the same time, the existence of an independent republican state under the very nose of the imperialist king of Magadha can't be imagined There had collected a good number of listners during the last preachings of Mahavira and we can't expect such a vast gathering very near the capital of Magadhan king, Ajatasatru, who had leaning towards Buddhism at that time, as shown in the Buddhist texts[226]

**Gathering of Republican kings at Mahavira's death :**

Now, from the Pava of Bihar, we move to the Pava of the Mallas The Malla Mahajanapada at that time was divided into

two confederacies - one with its capital at Pava[227] and the other, at Kusinara[228] Both the capitals were situated at a short distance from each other and are known to the Jainas and Buddhists as their sacred places, where their prophets preached their final liberation[229] The Mallas[230] of Pava were called *Paveyyaka malla* and of Kusinara, as *Kasinaraka*

That these were separate capitals is shown by a Buddhist literature which says that after the Buddha's death at Kusinara, the Mallas of Pava sent messengers to claim their share in the Buddha's relices[231] The *Kalpasutra* says that on the eve of Mahavira's death, the eighteen confederate kings of Kasi and Kosala[232] and eighteen kings belonging to the Malla and Lichchavi clan were among those who went on to mark the passing away of the great Jina[233] It is further stated that they observed fast and ordered illuminations on the day of the new moon, saying "since the light of intelligence is gone, let us make an illumination of material matters"[234] Since Mahavira's *nirvana* occured early in the morning, the Jainas worship Mahavira at that time and illuminate the earthen pots The whole day is now called Deepavali[235]

During those days, it was customary of the kings and general public too, to collect and celebrate the *nirvana* of that teacher whom they loved and regarded most Pava was the capital of Mallas and so the presence of these republican kings on that occasion cannot be undermined As the Lichchhavis were relatives of Mahavira from the side of Trisala,[236] they had also come to Pava Besides, both the Mallas and the Lichchhavis were good neighbours and believed in the same pattern of administration During emergency, they organised and united themselves into a confederacy[237] and at this period also they had united in view of the war raging between Magadha and Vaisali All the eighteen *ganarajas* of Kasi and Kosala reached Pava without any delay

to show their respect, regard and sympathy for the great prophet and his doctrines and this proves that they were able to flock to this place within a short time [238]

While we see such a good gathering at Pava on the occasion of the *nirvana* celebrations by these *ganarajas*, Ajatasatru of Magadha figures nowhere in it, though, according to the Jain texts, he was a worshipper of Mahavira also Even the Deepavali festival was not celebrated in Magadha on that occasion, as it was far away from Pava and Ajatasatru could not have got the news of Mahavira's *nirvana* so early The references show the participation of the republican states who had been interested in celebrating the occasion and since Magadha was an imperialist state, and Ajatasatru had no political affinity with these republican states he avoided his presence there If Pava had been close to Rajgriha-Nalanda the presence of the Republican states would not have been expected even

**How Mahavira reached Pava?**

From the life of Mahavira[239] we know that he was in Rajgriha-Nalanda area from November 492 B C to the early months of 490 B C [240] The Buddhist as well as the Jain works show that Mahavira went to Pava from Rajgriha, where he breathed his last He did not either prefer Pava, near Rajgriha, or his birth place Vaisali as a suitable place for his *nirvana* Rather he decided to go to the capital of the Mallas, which was a centre of Jain faith As Pavapuri was in close proximity of Rajgriha, there was no need of making special preparation before departing for the intended place But it seems that preparations had been made for the intended journey to Pava The manner of visit of Mahavira from Nalanda to Pava, as indicated in the *Majjhima Nikaya,*[241] proves beyond doubt that Mahavira had to traverse a long distance before he could reach the place of his *nirvana* Evidently, it is

a clear indication that the place was far away from Rajgriha which could be not evidently Pava of Nalanda

The news of the *nirvana* of Mahavira at Pava was given to Buddha by his disciples Ananda and Chund Samunuddesa, while the latter was having his camp in the Sakya country [242] The Buddhist texts[243] mention the story how the news was communicated to Buddha by Chunda, who had come to Ramagama[244] after spending his rainy season at Pava The Buddha was also informed of the differences that engulfed the Jain followers after the death of Nataputta [245] This clearly indicates that Pava, where Mahavira died, was nearer to the Sakya country and that is why Chunda, who was the habitant of Pava, took less time in reaching and giving this message to Buddha

**Why Buddha did not take his last breath at Pava?**

The Buddhist sources,[246] while dealing with his *parinirvana*, say that Buddha took in his last meal the *Sukara maddava* in the house of Chund Karmar and became unwell after that He apprehended that his last days had come and so he should select his place of *nirvana* His eyes fell on Kusinara or Kusinagar and he reached there with much difficulties owing to his illness Mahavira had breathed his last at Pava and Buddha did not like the same place for his own *nirvana* Pava had Jain majority while Kusinagar was a seat of the persons of Buddhist faith If we take the Pava of Bihar as the place of the *nirvana* of Mahavira, then all the aforesaid facts remain unexplained and then the Buddha would have had no hesitation in breathing his last at Pava of Eastern U P

**Geographical Evidences :**

The distance between Pava and Kusinagar also gives the impression that these places were close to each other The Buddha

on the day of his *nirvana* started from Pava in the early morning and reached Kusinagar the same evening, though he was indisposed, It seems that if the places would have been far apart, it would not have been possible for Buddha to reach there within so short a time The nearness of these two places is proved by the text of Atthakatha of *Digha Nikaya,*[247] which mentions the distance as three *gavyutas* Further, on the basis of 'Gavyuti-Kosa dvayama' the distance of one *gavyuti* is equivalent to about five kilometres Thus, the total distance which Buddha traversed was only fourteen to fifteen kilometres [248] The distance between Pavanagar and Kusinagar is, now-a-days, the same

If we assume this place to be Pavapuri of Bihar, the distance between this place and Kusinagar would come to two hundred and twentyfive kilometres It seems absolutely unlikely, therefore, that the Buddha, an old man of eighty years of age, and suffering from serious stomach trouble, could have the strength enough to travel to Kusinara from such a great distance as exists between Kusinara and the present Pavapuri [249] On the other hand, it is quite probable that he could have gone to Kusinagar from Pava which was only at a day-journey-distance The story of Chunda confirms that the distance from Kusinagar to Pava could be traversed in a day

The Buddhist texts[250] mention Kukuttha (modern Ghaghi) river lying between Kusinagar and Pava, and Buddha had to cross this river on his way to Kusinagar He is said to have taken bath in river Kukuttha and drank its water before entering Kusinagar for his *nirvana* [251] The existence of this river even today further stregthens our supposition An old place similar to the name of Kukuttha is Kulkula, presently situated near Sathiaon and a big fair is held there in the honour of the great saint every year in the month of Chaitya [252]

Buddha, when for the last time left Vaisali on way to Kusinagar, came across many places of importance, among which mention is made of Mandagrama or Bhandagrama, Hasthigrama (Hathua), Amragrama (Amava), Bhoganagar (Baduraon) and Pava (Sathiaon)[253] On the way, Buddha had to cross the river Gandak and not the river Ganges as it has wrongly been pointed out by some scholars The river Ganges does not fall in the route from Kusinagar to Vaisali via Pava The above mentioned places and the river positions show that Pava was west of the river Gandak and Vaisali If we take Pavapuri of South Bihar as the *nirvana* place, it would be south of Vaisali and then Buddha would have had to cross the Ganges for reaching Pavanagar of U P (The position of two Pavas are shown in Map No 2)

**Archaeological Evidences**

While these Jain and Buddhist texts definitely prove that Pava in the Eastern U P was the *nirvana* place of Mahavira, there are valuable archaeological evidences too to give further support to the same In the Cunningham's report, the name of this place is given as Chetiaon According to Bhikshu Dharmarakshita, Sathiaon is distorted name of Chaityagrama Due to the existence of a good number of Chaityas, it was called Chaityagrama Still we find old remains everywhere in and around Sathiaon (old Pava) which proves the then existence of big palaces and towns here Some excavations have been done here also and several walls, brickwalls and remains of buildings and temples have been located[254] At a place called Velabhari or Virabhari, three or four kilometres off Sathiaon, some statues, seals and coins have been excavated[255] Dr Vogal, after examining the remains, has proved that they belong to the period either of the Mauryas or pre Maurya days[256]

It is said in the Jain texts that Nandivardhana (Mahavira's

elder brother), erected a temple at the relics of Tirthankara Mahavira [257] In the excavations done in and around Pava, remains of an old *stupa* have been found at Fazilnagar, and the scholars are of the view that this stupa is the same constructed by Nandivardhana [258] It is supported that the Muhammadan atrocities forced the Jainas to vacate this sacred place and migrate towards the southern part of Bihar for their religious purity and safety

Prof Yogendra Mishra, who has made extensive researches on the history of Jainas, strongly supports that Mahavira got his *nirvana* at Pava of U P and not of Bihar [259] The early Indian literature does not mention Pavapuri of Bihar anywhere The Chinese and Tibetan travellers also, such as Fahien, Hiuen-Tsang and Dharmaswami (A D 1197-1264) have not uttered even a single sentence about it Besides, we don't have any inscription in our support P C Nahar points out that no inscription has been found at Pavapuri before 1203 A D [260] The inscription found in that very year neither bears the name of Pavapuri nor mentions the importance of this place as Mahavira's place of *nirvana* An image of Mahavira was installed there in that very year [261]

Madan Kirti, who flourished in the second quarter of the thirteenth century A D , mentions Pavapuri (with its image of Sri Vira Jina) as one of the twentysixth Jain *tirthas* of his time The Svetambara Jain author Jinaprabhasuri of the fourteenth century had devoted at least two chapters on Pavapuri [262] Thus the position of Pavapuri as a Jain *tirtha* had been well established by the fourteenth century The next inscription of Pavapuri is of the year 1641, which for the first time acknowledges the religious importance of the place as the place of *nirvana* of the head of the Jain church and twentyfourth Tirthankara Vardhamana Mahavira Probably the reason of such an acknowledgement was that the region adjoining Rajgriha-Nalanda had no place of Jain worship, and so the Jain

followers selected the suburban area for the centre of their religious activities Thus, the Jain idols were established[263] and temples were constructed [264] This place was developed by several wealthy Jain followers during the late 19th and early 20th centuries[265] as mentioned by the rest of the inscriptions found there

**Mahavira's Contributions to Jainism**

Mahavira was not the founder of the system of the laity and recluse, but was only a crusader of the existing one held by a series of twentythree Tirthankaras Nevertheless it was undoubtedly he who put the teachings of Jainism on a solid footing and systematised and crystallized them as an independent school of thought He added much to it and gave a philosophic justification for the rules of conduct propounded by his predecessor Parsvanatha He introduced changes in the existing religion in order to meet the needs of the time No direct evidence regarding the teachings of Mahavira has been preserved and they are supposed to be embodied in the fourteenth *Purvas* and eleven Angas [266] He gave his sermons in the prevalent language of the common men of his time, which has been termed as Ardhamagadhi [267]

According to Mahavira, *nirvana* was the ultimate object of Jainism and it consists in the attainment of peace and infinite bliss Besides, right faith, right knowledge and right conduct, were the three essential points, according to him, which lead to perfection by the destruction of *Karmans* Without right faith, there is no knowledge Without right knowledge there is no virtuous conduct, without virtues, there is no deliverence and without deliverence *(moksha)*, there is no perfection [268]

While Parsva taught only four vows *(Chaturyama*[269]*)* for the realisation of absolute happiness, Mahavira taught five in all *(panchayama)* making chastity a separate vow together These

five vows are *Ahimsa* (not to kill), *satya* (not to lie), *Asteya* (not to steal), *Aparigraha* (to renounce all interest in worldly things, especially in property) and *Brahmacharya* (not to indulge in adultery) [270] Since these five vows are primarily ethical codes about behaviour in a society, we may call these vows collectively as great Five Rules of Behaviour [271]

It is understood that Parsva had also advocated celibacy It is included in his vow of *Aparigraha* (non possession) This indirect implication of non-possassion could easily be understood by the followers of Parsva who were simple and wise Mahavira's disciples, on the other hand, being prevaricating and slow of understanding, could only, with difficulty, observe the vow of abstinence from all sexual acts in clear terms [272]

As celibacy and nudity are closely related from the point of view of controlling the senses and the non-attachment to bodily pleasures and external needs, Mahavira also introduced the practice of nudity *(acela)* among the monks [273] Parsva had allowed an under and an upper garment to his followers [274]

He also prescribed certain rules of conduct for ascetics These rules are classified under such general heads as begging, walking, modes of speech, entry into other's possessions, postures, place of study and attending to the calls of nature [275] Another reform which Mahavira added was making confession compulsory instead of optional for monks [276]

The preachings of Mahavira had a direct and blissful effect on the Indian social structure and helped its upliftment He successfully tackled the various problems of the day such as inferior status of women in the family, society and religion, the Brahmanical caste system and untouchability, the exploitation of the weak by the strong and killing or hurting life for the sake

of religion or pleasure of the senses [277] He showed the path of economic equality through non possession and tried to eradicate social corruption through the law of celibacy He exhorted people to eschew slavery and thus, it can be said that the sense of freedom, humanity, liberty and respect for other's views and feeling of co-existence etc, which are the various aspects of the concept of equality, originated from the life and teachings of Mahavira [278]

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2. *Uvasagadasao* VII 187
3. *Uttarapurana* 79/295
4. *Digha Nikaya* I pp 49 56-58, *Majjhima Nakaya* 1, p 198, *Vinaya texts SBE* Vol XVII, pp 108 ff
5. Hoernle *Uvasagdasao* (Bibliotheca Indica Series) pp 3-6 for detail S Stenenson *The Heart of Jainism* pp 21ff *Cambridge History of India* Vol I p 173, Jacobi *SBE* Vol XXII Intro pp x-xiii B C Law *Mahavira His Life and Teachings* pp 19 ff Rockhill *Life of Buddha* p 62 C J Shah *Jainism in Northern India* pp 23 ff P C Roychoudhary *Jainism in Bihar*, pp 1 13ff A Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy* Vol I p 173 J C Mathur and Y Mishra (ed) *Homage to Vaisali* pp 4f 76ff, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol VII p 466, *JRAS* 1902, pp 282 f 286f *ASI AR* 1903-4 pp 81 ff, *JRAS* Vol XLV p 4
6. *Majjhima Nikaya Atthakatha* 423 *Bodhisatva Bhumi* 246/6
7. His paternal uncle Suparsva elder brother Nandivardhana, elder sister Sudarsana, daughter Anoja or Priyadarsana belonged to the same Kshatriya *gotra*
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13. *Acharanga Sutra* II, 15,15 (*SBE* XXII, p 193)
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pp 254-55), J C Jain and M L Mehta, *Jain Sahitya ka Itihas* Varanasi, 1966, pt II, p 228

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17 M C Jaini, *Life of Mahavira*, 1908, Allahabad, p 18

18 *Avasyakacurini* of Jinadasagani Mahattara, Vol 1,p 245

19 *Jain Sutras SBE*, Vol XXII, Intro P XIII

20 There were six sisters of Trisala namely Mrigavati Suprabha, Prabhavati, Jyestha, Chandana and Chelana (*Sraman* Nov 1980, p 24)

21 She was of the Jalandhara Lineage and wife of the Brahman Usavadatta of the Kodala lineage (*Acarangasutra* II 15-1, *Kalpasutra* V 20 )

22 But the Digambara tradition ( *Apabhramasa Mahapurana Sandhi*, 95-102) does not believe in the story of the transfer of the embryo of Trisala

23 *Acarangasutra* II, 15 1 (*SBE*, XXII, p 189)

24 *Kalpasutra* V 19 (*SBE* XXII, p 266) *Acarangasutra* II, 15 4-5 (*SBE* XXII pp 90-91)

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34 *Acaranga Sutra* II 15 15, *kalpasutra* v 108, *Uttarapurana* 74/295

35 M L Mehta, *Jain Culture* Varanasi 1969 p 13

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47 Y Mishra, *An Early History of Vaisali* p 230

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51 *Jain Siddhanta Bhaskara* 3 (Sep 1936), p 50 f n

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53 *Meghaduta* 1 30

54 *Vaisali* 1st edition, Delhi, 1947, 2nd revised and enlarged edition,Bombay 1958, *Tirthankara Mahavira*, Vol I, (Bombay 1960)

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57 Kolhua of the present day

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74 P C Raychoudhary, *Jainism in Bihar* Patna, 1956 p 14
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78 *Uttarapurana* 74/296-97
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82 Pleasant to the sight
83 *Avasyakacurni*, Vol I p 416, *Kalpasutravritti* of Dharmasagara, p 92, *Uttaradhyayanavritti* of Santisuri, p 154
84 *Acarangasutra*, II, 15 15
85 *Kalpasutra* v 110, *Acarangasutra* II 15 15
86 *Padmapurana*, *Harivamsa Purana* and *Tiloyapannati* etc
87 *Abhidhanachintamani* part II, v 246
88 *Acarangasutra* II 15 17, *Kalpasutra* v 110
89 *Acarangasutra* II, 15 22, *Kalpasutra* v 115
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91 *Ibid*
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96 *Kalpasutra* v 117
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98 *Acharangasutra* II 15 25 *Kalpasutra* v 120
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100 *Bhagvati Sutra* XV,I (tr in *Uvasagasasao* pp I)
101 *Ibid* XV Su 554
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106 *Ibid* III p 383
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108 *Bhagavati Sutra* XV I Una I
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112 *Bhagavati Sutra* Vol V p 2381
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117 *Bhagavati Sutra* XV su 542 ff 664
118 *Ibid*
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123 *Digha Nikaya* (Saranatha ed ) p 20
124 *Bhagavati sutra* XV Su 554 ff 666
125 B M Barua *op cit* p 70
126 *Bhagavati sutra* XV

127 *IA* Vol XVII p 280 XX, pp 170-71
128 *Tri Pur Cha* bk X, Canto VIII, vv 434-470, *Bhagavati sutra, 15 1 555*
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131 *Heart of Jainism* P 38
132 *Sraman Bhagwan Mahavira* Ahmedabad, 1948 pp 357-370
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135 Ujjuvaliya in Prakrit and sometimes spelt as Rajukula or Rjuvalika (*Heart of Jainism*, p 38)
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140 *Ibid*
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142 *Uttarapurana* 74/276
143 *Ibid* 74/295
144 *Kalpasutra* v 121 (*SBE* XXII p 263)
145 *Ibid*
146 *Avasyakacurni* I pp 322 324 *Avasyaka Niryukti* 526 This place is identified with modern Pavapuri in the disrtict of Nalanda in Bihar State
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183 *Bhagavati Sutra* 11 11 424
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190 *Bhagavati* 12 2 441
191 *Ibid* pp 556 f
192 *Uvasagadasao* (tr by P L Vaidya) p 32
193 *Avasyakasutra* p 299 *Bhagavati sutra* 13 6 491
194 *Avasyaka Curni* p 91, *Antagadasao* 7 p 43
195 *Bhagavati* 458
196 *Uvavayiya* 1 *Dasa* 10 1 *Stha* 693
197 Lecture xx (*SBE* XLV pp 100-07) also *Bhagavati Sutra* 1 1 4
198 *Tri Pur Cha* x 6 8
199 *Ibid* x 6 10 11 Cf also *Bhagaviti Sutra* 1 1 4
200 Cf *Bihar Through the Ages* p 127
201 *Aupapatika* 12 27 30 Hemchandra's *Parisisthaparvan* Canto IV *Avasyaka Sutra* pp 684
202 Cf J C Shah *Jainism in Northern India* pp 88 ff
203 *Uva* pp 84 85 90 95 105 160 and 163
204 Cf K C Jain *Lord Mahavira and His Times* p 68

205 *Digha Nikaya*, I, 78-79, Cf *IHQ* I, p 153
206 Cf B C Law, *Some Jain cannonical Sutras* pp 74,162-204
207 There had been continuous fighting among Kasi Kosala and Magadha and finally Kasi-Kosala was conquered and incorporated into Magadha (*Samyukta Nikaya* I, 82-85)
208 *Bhagavati Sutra*, 12 2 441-442
209 *Ibid* 12 2 441-442
210 The first Jain remains found in this region is from Pataliputra, where a torso of Jain Tirthankara and platform of a temple have been recovered
211 The Digambara traditions say that there was no illumination, no hall nor audience at the time of the death of Mahavira (Cf Stevenson *op cit* p 45)
212 *Kalpasutra* v 147
213 Both the traditions accept that Mahavira died in the month of Kartika, but there is difference of 24 hours regarding the time of his *nirvana*
214 This is called the *Uttaradhyayana Sutra*
215 *Kalpasutra* v 147, *Tri Pur Char* X,XIII, 217-223
216 *Jain Sidhanta Bhaskar*, Year 3, No 1
217 Pavapuri is about ten kilometers south of Biharsharif in Nalanda district of Bihar State
218 Important among them are Carlleyle, Cunningham, Raj Bali Pandey Bhikshu Dharmarakshita, Baba Raghva Das, Rahul Sankrityayana, Hira Lal Jain, Nathu Ram Premi, Vijayendra Suri, Yogendra Mishra Muni Nagraj and Kanhaiya Lal Saraogi
219 K Morgan, *Religion of the Hindus* Vol I New York 1953 p 302 *Bengal Village Directory* Vol XLI p 105
220 *Anekant* 33 4 Oct-Dec 1980, p 86
221 *Ibid*
222 Most probably it is located in the region near Parsvanath hill (Muni Ratnaprabha Vijay *Sraman Bhagwan Mahavira* Ahmedabad, 1948 p 375)
223 The Digambara texts *Tiloyapannati* (4/1204), *Nirvana Bhakti* (16-19) *Harivamasapurana* (16 15-20) *Jayadhavala* (Part I, p 81) and *Uttarapurana* (76-508-512) mention Pavanagar, Pavapura, Pavanagari and Madhyama Pava for this place The Svetambara scriptures *Kalpasutra Avasyaka Niryukti, Parisistha parva* and *Vividhatirthakalpa* etc give names like Majjhima Pava, Madhyama Apapa, Apapapuri and Pavapuri for the place called Pava (B Jain, *Bharat Ke Digambara Jain Tirtha* part I, Bombay, 1974 )
224 M S Pandey, *Geography of Ancient Bihar* p 151
225 Rhys Davids *Buddhist India* Indian Reprint Delhi 1971, p 19
226 Shodhadarsha Vol XXII October 1992, pp 24-31
227 It is interesting that even today, a section of the people living here say themselves to be Mallas
228 *Samyutta Nikaya* Pt I (tr by Jagdish Kasyapa and Dharmarakshita, Mahabodhi Sabha, Saranatha, 1954, Int p 4)
229 C J Shah, *op cit* p 107
230 *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names* pt II, p 453, M L Mehta, *Prakrit Proper Names* pt, II, p 614

231 *Digha Nikaya,* II p 165
232 At that time the empire of Kosala was called the Kasi-Kosala, Cf K P Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity,* p 48
233 *Kalpasutra,* v 128 (*SBE* Vol XXII, p 266)
234 *Ibid,* v 128
235 *Tri Pur Cha* X, 13, 247-248 See also author s article 'Jain parva Deepawali, utpatti aur mahatva' in *Himsa Virodh* Oct 1986, pp 2-5
236 Trisala was Mahavira's mother and daughter of the Lichchhavis
237 *Majjhima Nikaya* Vol II, p 101
238 *Kalpasutra,* v 128 (*SBE* Vol XXII, p 266)
239 *Life of Mahavira* Vol II, pt II pp 650-658
240 The date of the *nirvana* of Mahavira has been fixed as 490 B C by Dr Yogendra Mishra in his thesis book-*An Early History of Vaisali* Delhi, 1962, pp 194-212 This I am inclined to believe the correct date, not only on account of his great accuracy and fact in all these matters, but also because it agrees best with the statement of the Jainas and Buddhists that Mahavira died before Gautam Buddha
241 *Majjhima Nikaya* Atthakatha, Samagamasutta, pt IV, p 34
242 *Digha Nikaya* II pp 119,209, *Majjhima Nikaya* II, pp 244 ff
243 *Majjhima Nikaya* 3 1-4, *Samagama sutta Digha Nikaya* 3-6 *Pasadika sutra*
244 Ramagama was the centre of Koliyas who were connected with the Sakyans
245 *Digha Nikaya* III 210, *Majjhima Nikaya* II 243
246 *Digha Nikaya* II 126 ff *Udana* VIII 5
247 *Sumangalavilasini* (P T S ), Vol II p 583
248 Turner has also accepted this distance to be correct (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* pt VIII p 1005)
249 *Digha Nikaya* (Bombay University Publication) pt II pp 100 ff
250 *Ibid* pp 102, 108, *Udana commentary* (PTS) p 238
251 *Mahaparinibban Sutta* IV 22-23 (*SBE* XI, pp 72-74)
252 *Pavanagar Times* (A Hindi weekly published from Deoria U P ) November 10 1975, p 1
253 *Mahaparinibban Sutta* (Dhammepadatha Katha) Vol III p 439 (SBE Vol XI pp 64-70) Cf also *Sutta Nipata* verse 1013, *Samyutta Nikaya* (tr Jagdish and Dharmarakshita) Saranatha 1954, Intro p 4
254 *Pavanagar Times* Deoria Nov 10,1975 p 1, *Anekanta* 33 4, p 86 *Sraman* April-June 1991 p 94
255 *ASI* Report, Vol 1 1862-65, pp 88-90
256 *ASI* Vogel's Report 1905, p 38
257 *Anekant* 33 4, p 86
258 *Ibid*
259 Yogendra Mishra, *Prachin Pava* Gorakhpur 1972 p 17
260 *Jain Lekha Sangraha* pt II p 363
261 *Ibid* p 232
262 *Tirtha Kalpa* XIV p 82 XXI pp 107-159
263 J G Veglar saw the construction of a big Jain temple at village Puri in 1872-73 (*Archaeological Survey of India* Vol VIII p 77)
264 *IHQ* Vol I pp 116 ff

265 P C Nahar, *op cit*, pp 263-266
266 The Digambaras think it to have been lost, but the Svetambaras don't subscribe to this view
267 'Jain and other system of religion and philosophy upto 325 B C by N C Shastri in *Comprehensive History of Bihar* (ed B P Sinha) Vol I pt 1 p 365
268 *Uttaradhyayana* XXVIII, 30
269 *Ibid* XXIII, 12 (*SBE* Vol XLV, p 121)
270 *Pancastikayasara* gatha 160
271 'Jainism' by B B Kundu, *Jain Journal* Vol XVI No 2 p 68
272 Mahavira has given ten conditions for the realisation of celibacy (*Uttaradhyayana* XVI vv 1-17, *SBE* XLV pp 73-77)
273 *Acarangasutra*, I,7 7 1, (*S B E*, Vol XXII, p 73)
274 *Uttaradhyayana* XXIII, 13, (*SBE*, XLV p 121)
275 *Acarangasutra* bk II, pt I (*SBE* XXII, pp 88-171)
276 *Uttaradhyayanasutra* XXVI (*SBE* XLV, pp 140-49)
277 J P Jain *Religion and Cult of the Jain* p 16
278 Vartamana Bharatiya sandarbha mein Mahavira ke upadeson ka mahatva' by B K Tiwary in *Shodhadarsa* Vol 16-17 July 1992, pp 46-47

# JAINISM BEFORE THE MAURYAS (B.C. 490-325)

**A short political history of the period :**

It was during the reign of Ajatasatru that both Mahavira and Gautam Buddha, teachers of Jainism and Buddhism respectively, are said to have entered *nirvana* Ajatasatru was the son of Bimbisara (Srenik), the mightiest ruler of Eastern India [1] Srenik Bimbisara came to the throne in 545 B C and ruled till 493 B C [2] Thus he died about three years before the *nirvana* (490 B C ) of Mahavira He had already annexed Anga,[3] which became a viceroyalty with Champa as its capital and according to Jain sources, Ajatasatru had become a viceroy at Champa[4] and the united kingdom of Magadha and Anga was 300 leagues in extent [5]

**Kunika or Ajatasatru :**

Kunika Ajatasatru succeeded Srenik Bimbisara in B C 493[6] and ruled upto 468 B C He was attributed by the names of Kunika,[7] Asogachandra,[8] Vajjividehaputta[9] or Videhaputta [10] With his accession, Magadha reached the high water mark of the power of the Bimbisarian dynasty He had been representative of Magadhan empire at Champa and was thus well versed in administrative works He continued the aggressive policy of his father and waged a war against Kosala in B C 492-91, the result of which came in the merger of Kasi in Magadha permanently[11] and marriage of Ajatasatru with the daughter of Prasenjit, named Vajira [12] Though cordial relations prevailed between Magadha and Vajjis during

the early years, Ajatasatru, due to his aggressive mendicants, attacked Vajji for one cause or another[13] and finally it became a part of the Magadhan empire [14] According to the *Arya-Manjusri-Mula-Kalpa,* the empire of Ajatasatru comprised Anga, Magadha, Varanasi and Vaisali [15] Thus, at the time of the death of Mahavira, the territory of Magadha had extended its boundaries in all sides and was the most powerful kingdom

**Udayibhadra :**

Both the Buddhist and Jain traditions[16] are of the view that Udayibhadda (bhadra) succeeded Kunika Ajatasatru But the *Puranas* insert Darsaka as Ajatasatru's successor [17] Professor Geiger considers the Puranic version as certainly an error [18] Roychaudhary takes Darsaka to be a *mandalika raja* and not king of Magadha [19] The Pali canon and Jain tradition do not warrant us in holding that Darsaka was the immediate successor of Ajatasatru The Jain tradition as recorded in the *Kathakosa*[20] and *Parisistha parvan*[21] clearly represent Udayi or Udayin as son of Kunika by his wife *Padmavati*[22] and his immediate successor That Udayin or Udayi was the son and successor of Ajatasatru is borne out by Samannaphala Sutta of the *Digha Nikaya,*[23] the *Samantapasadika*[24] and the *Sumangalavilasini* [25] Udayi may have advanced better claims for the throne not only because he was elder to Darsaka but also because like his father Ajatasatru he was also a viceroy at Champa [26] Some scholars have considered it probable that Darsaka might be one of the many sons or grandsons of the king, Bimbisara [27] Hence in the chronological list of the main Sisunaga dynasty, we need not count Darsaka In any way, it cannot be confidently asserted that he was the immediate successor of Ajatasatru [28] He is credited with the transfer of his capital from Rajgriha to Pataliputra[29] for political and commercial advantages But the process of transferring of the capital had started from the very time of Ajatasatru,

for the Buddha, when on his way to Vaisali from Magadha, saw Ajatasatru's ministers measurig out a town [30]

According to the Buddhist sources, Udayibhadra ruled for 16 years,[31] while Jainas gave him 60 years [32] But the 60 years may be his life figure and he might have reigned for 16 years only

**Successors of Udayi :**

There is great controversy over the question of the successor of Udayi While the Jainas attribute no direct heir to Udayi,[33] the *Puranas*[34] put Nandivardhana followed by Mahanandin as his successor In the Ceylonese chronicles[35] Anirudha, his son Mudra, and the latter's son Nagadasaka, have been mentioned as successor of Udayi It seems that Nandivardhana, successor of Udayi had two other nick names, Anirudha and Munda and Mahanandin can be identified with Nagadasaka [36]

The tradition tells that all these kings were parricides and that the people became angry and banished the dynasty and raised an *Amatya* named Susu-naga (Saisunaga)[37] to the throne He was acting as Magadhan viceroy at Benaras before his kingship and had a second capital at Vaisali [38] It seems that about 414 A D , Sisunaga came to the throne His next successor Kalasoka[39] brought back the capital at Pataliputra permanently [39] According to Mahavamsa,[40] all the ten sons[41] of Kalasoka ruled after him simultaneously and the last of the Saisunagas was done away with by Mahapadma Nanda [42]

**The Nandas :**

There is a great controversy over the lineage of the Nandas According to the Jain tradition,[43] they were of low caste (barber's son), while the *Puranas* describe Mahapadma Nanda as a son of Mahanandin (last king of the Saisunage dynasty) by

a *sudra* woman [44]

It is interesting to note here that the Jain texts say Nandas as *sudras* because the Jainas do not distinguish upper caste from the lower one on point of birth, but give much preference to the nature of the job As the tendency of uplifting the lower class and caste was growing up, the Jainas did not hesitate in accepting the Nandas to be of low origin

Brahmana writers created all sorts of doubts in the *Kshatriya* origin of the Nandas, may be because they were believers in the Jain faith and had connections with Jain ministers and patriarchs

The Jainas definitely say that Udayin had no successor, and that the Magadhan empire went into the hands of the Nandas It may be that Udayin was succeeded by some weaklings, and that Mahandandin, the last of the dynasty, had a *sudra,* or low caste woman, a son named Mahapadma Nanda, who usurped the throne, and so established the Nanda faith or dynasty

Mahapadma founded the Nanda dynasty which had nine kings, so they are called *Nava* Nandas [45] Mahapadma Nanda claims to have been *Sarvakshatrairtaka*[46] (exterminator of the *kshatriyas)* by killing all the *kshatriyas* He attempted for the first time in Indian history towards a political integration He appears to have completely uprooted the contemporary neighbouring dynasties The Jain sources also voushsafe a large dominion of the Nandas [47] By the time of Mahapadma, almost the whole of North India and also parts of the Deccan were brought under one political system and thus its boundary abutted on the sea, which confirms the statement of the Jain authors that the Nanda territory was *asamudramapi sriyah*[48] The capital of the Nandas, Pataliputra, also became both the centre of wealth, pomp and grandeur and also of education and religion The *Puranas* have alloted a total

of 100 years to the Nanda dynasty [49] The last Nanda ruler Dhanananda was put to death and Chanakya succeeded in installing Chandragupta [50] The Nanda rule appears to have come to an end in 325-4 B C

**Position of Jainism during the Period :**

The royal generations during this period either patronised or followed Jainism and provided all possible facilities to develop its literary and cultural activities The Jainas were given magnificent grants for their spiritual purposes Numerous Jain temples and sculptures were erected by kings and many facilities were provided for literary services throughout India As a result, the Jain *acharyas* wrote ample for them in works, in general languages

**Kunika Ajatasatru :**

Kunika or Ajatasatru[51] from the very beginning, has been represented as a Jain in the Jaina texts and these literatures throw light on almost all the incidents connected with his life The first Upanga, *Uvavai* throws light primarily on the relations of Kunika with Mahavira [52] He is described to have met Mahavira at Vaisali and Champa several times [53] In the Jain sutras[54] it is stated that Ajatasatru declared his strog conviction in the ideas of Mahavira who had initiated him into his religion by explaining the ideas of renunciation and non-violence He is said to have appointed an officer *'Pravrttivaduka Purusa'*, who informed the king of the activities of Mahavira's daily life [55] An idol of Mahavira was found at Mathura, which is said to have been made during the 5th century B C The inscription on this idol says that king Ajatasatru (Kunika) worshipped Tirthankara Mahavira [56]

**The Buddhist's Claim Over Ajatasatru .**

In spite of all these facts; there arises a controversy whether Ajatasatru was a staunch Jain or Buddhist In the *Samannaphala Sutta*, Ajatasatru is shown as a follower of Buddha The text

shows him requesting Buddha in this way "O God, take me in thy shelter as thy fold-handed worshipper from today"[57]

But this was only a formal request and he never became a follower of Buddha He is said to have approached Mahavira for a satisfactory explanation concerning matters of religion, but he was disappointed and hence turned to the Buddha with a far better result[58] The king met Buddha only once,[59] where as he is shown visiting Mahavira several times[60] Not only this, the king had even attended the religious discourses of Sudharma Swami, the head of the school after Mahavira[61] The Jainas have more claim to include the 'Patricide king' amongst their converts than the Buddhists

There are many more reasons for Kunika Ajatasatru not being a follower of Buddha, such as his intimacy with Devadatta, a rebel disciple of Buddha, enmity with Vajjis, a favourite clan of Buddha and his battle against Prasenjit, a staunch devotee and follower of Buddha The Buddhist traditions look on him as a patricide, disregard him and calls a person evil who remains in contact with him[62] On the other hand, the Jainas regard him as most humble to his father after the repentence for his bad deed[63] These references prove Ajatasatru's distance from the former tradition and nearness to the latter

Ajatasatru seems to have been held in hatred by the Niganthas by the episode in which he got killed 500 Jain monks (nirgranthas), believed to be the murderers of Moggallana, the chief disciple of Buddha[64] But this mention occurs only in the Atthakatha (commentary) and thus has no greater importance than being merely a heresay

Here, one thing is to be noticed Although the relationship between the Jains and Buddhists were by no means cordial, we

must not attach too much importance to the controversies between them or to the number of converts said to have been gained by one sect at the expense of the other Between two contemporary religious communities working side by side in the same region and often coming into contact, there must have skirmishes, and that is why the literatures of both denounce each other The Jainas and Buddhists were in fact too far asunder to be able to inflict any very serious damage on each other

There are certain references available in the later works, which point to Ajatasatru's antogonism with Buddha The *Avadanasataka* mentions that Ajatasatru put a ban on the worshipping of the Buddhist *stupa* which was built by Bimbisara and even death penalty was awarded if any one was found worshipping it [65] According to a version, Ajatasatru tried to murder his younger brother, Silava, who was inclined to Buddhism [66]

Well known scholar of Buddhism Rhys Davids clearly expresses his view that Ajatasatru was never converted to Buddhism "We are told, however, that after the Buddha's death, he asked (on the ground that he, like the Buddha, was *kshatriya)* for a portion of the relics, that he obtained them, and built a *stupa* or burial mound over them And though the oldest authority says nothing about it, younger works state that on the convention of the first council at Rajgriha, shortly after the decease, it was the king who provided and prepared that hall at the entrance of the Sattapanni cave, where the rehersal of the doctrine took place He may well have thus showed favour to the Buddhists without at all belonging to their party He would only, in so doing, be following the usual habit so characteristic of Indian monarchs of patronage towards all schools [67]

During his reign, the faith of Jainism prevailed all over his

empire As for example, we find its stronghold in Vaisali (the birth place of Mahavira) where Nagaputra Varuna,[68] a prominant citizen, fought against king Kunika of Magadha in the war between Magadha and Vajji confederacy,[69] but left the battlefield in the mid war and passed his last days in a lonely place by fully observing the holy teachings of the *nirgrantha* order [70]

**Udayabhadra :**

Like his father Kunika, the Jainas claim Udayi or Udayabhadra to be a great patron and follower of the same faith While the Buddhist texts say that Udayabhadra became a parricide, the Jain accounts never attach the stigma to him On the contrary he is described as a devoted son serving as his father's viceroy at Champa and as being overwhelmed with grief when the news of his father's death reached him [71] This favourable attitude of the Jain texts clearly show that he had sound relation with the Jainas of that period The *Vividhatirthakalpa* informs us that he became an advocate of Jainism During his period, Pataliputa was a centre of the religious activites of the Jainas [72] The *Avasyakasutra*[73] and Hemchandra's *Parisisthaparvan*[74] inform us that a fine Jain shrine (*chaityagriha)* of Neminath was erected by him in the centre of his new capital Pataliputra It appears that, during his reign, Jainism spread rapidly in Bihar and Pataliputra became one of the important centre of the Jainas

In 1912, two statues were recovered from Pataliputra which have been kept in the Bharahut gallary of Indian Museum (Calcutta) It bears the lines *'Bhago acho choo Nidhi se sapta khen vandi'* [75] K P Jaiswal is of view that these statues were installed by king Udayi, as in the ancient *pattavalis*, the *Ajai* or *Aja* has been used for king Udayi [76]

The king, like an orthodox Jain, regularly observed the monthly

religious festivals,[77] fasting on 8th and 14th *tithis* The high status of the Jain monks was recognised and they had access to the king's palace and this proved to be the cause of his ruin also A prince, whose father he had dethroned, plotted against his life, and, aware of the welcome accorded to the Jains by the king, he entered his palace in the disguise of a Jain monk and murdered him in the night [78]

**Successors of Udayi**

About the successors of Udayi, one thing is clear that all of them were followers of the Jain faith or helped them in one way or another [79] though their period of reign was short and of no importance

**The Nandas .**

The Jain texts and inscriptions claim Nandas as followers of Jain cult There are literary evidences to show that the Nanda rulers were favourably disposed towards Jainism [80] It is said that the Nandas were bitter enemies of the *Brahmanas* It is likely that the Nandas were Jainas and so they hated the *Brahmanas*, who regarded them also as unholy and unworthy of inclusion into the orthodox Hindu society [81] Thus looking to the anti Brahmanical origin of the Nandas, it is not strange to find that they were Jainas Besides their origin, the Jainas have nothing to say against the Nandas, which was not the case with the Buddhists

**Hathigumpha Inscription :**

The inscription in Hathigumpha of Kharavela[82] says that the kings of Nanda dynasty were the followers of Jainism [83] A certain 'Nandaraja' of this dynasty, who is twice mentioned in the famous Hathigumpha inscription of emperor Kharavela of Kalinga,[84] conquered Kalinga and took away the idol of Kalinga Jina, the *kuladevata* of Kalinga from there and enshrined the same in his

own capital[85] This Nandaraja (Nanda king) may be identified with Mahapadma Nanda, who is credited to have brought the entire land under his sole sway and also to have uprooted all the *kshatriyas*, rather the old reigning houses[86] We should hence identify Nandaraja of the Hathigumpha inscription with Mahapadma Nanda - the founder ruler of the Nanda dynasty.

So far the identification of this 'Kalinga Jina' is concerned, there arise many difficulties in our way First we see that it has got reference only in the Hathigumpha inscription and there is no literary tradition preserved in that connection anywhere Second that no material remains of an image have been found which could safely be attributed to any of the Jain Tirthankaras. Jayaswal and Banerjee[87] take it to be of Tirthankara Sitalanatha, while there are opinions that it was of Risabhadeva and Parsvanatha But as the memoirs of the visit of Mahavira to Orissa and his preachings as well, prior to his enlightenment, may have been quite fresh in the minds of the people, the people of Kalinga after his demise probably made a lofty image of his for the purpose of worship The Kalinga Jina, hence, may be indentified with Tirthankara Mahavira, the twentyforth of the line of Tirthankaras

The second reference to the Nanda king is to be found in the twelfth line of the Hathigumpha inscription which says that 'Kharavela brought back the image of Kalinga Jina which had been carried away by Nandaraja' Here, Nandaraja has been charged with having taken away the image of a Jain Tirthankara to Magadha, from where the same was brought back by Kharavela This shows that the image was well preserved by Nandaraja and consequent rulers of Magadha, so that it was there till the time of Kharavela This would make our point strong that Nandaraja was a believer in the faith of a Jina From the reference to this image of Jina, we learn that image worship had begun just after 200 years or

a little earlier than the passing away of the last great teacher Vardhamana Mahavira

Mahapadma and his successors were staunch Jain is also proved by the fact that they used to follow the Jain tradition of offering special gifts on the day of Kartik Purnima, the last day of the Jain festival called Kartika Astahnika [88]

**The Mudrarakshasa**

The existence of the Jainas during the time of the Nandas is also proved by the Sanskrit play *Mudrarakshasa*, which dramatises the story of Chandragupta's accession and tells us that Chanakya hired a Jain monk Jivasiddhi as one of his chief emissaries, who, in the guise of a *Ksapanaka* [89] went in the palace of the Nanda king to win the confidence of the last Nanda minister The interpretation of the word *Ksapanaka* has always been done in the sense of a 'naked Jain monk' [90] This Jain monk acted as his chief agent, as the drama informs, in his political game of uprooting the rule of the 'Sudra Nandas' Jainism seems to be a factor in the social background of the drama, which ended in the overthrow of the kings and the end of his dynasty [91] This is how the relationship between the Nandas and the Jainas stands "The Jain religion certainly occupied a position of high honour in the days of the Nandas and in those of Kharavelas I may mention that I had come independently to the opinion that Nandas were Jainas [92]

**Greek Historians** ·

The Digambaras (Jainas) were, at the time of Alexender's invasion of India (327-326 B C ) a sizeable group and the Greek historians refer to them as 'gymnosophists', 'gymnetie' and 'gyenoi' [93] All these words have been used with regard to Digambara Jain ascetics They have also referred to some saints in the valley of Indus by 'Oretie' and 'Veretie' Both these words are also

used for Jain *munis*

**The Panch Pahari :**

The supposition that the last Nanda was a Jain is strengthened by the then local tradition, which ascribes to the erection of the *Panchapahari* at Pataliputra (modern Patna)[94] and a group of ancient stupas, to his aforesaid affiliations

**Jain Nanda Ministers :**

It is proved by the Jain tradition that the Nandas had a line of Jain ministers beginning with Kalpaka,[95] who helped king Nanda in uprooting all the reigning *kshatriya* dynasty[96] Acharya Haribhadra[97] and Hemchandra,[98] while referring to his religious attachment, have proved clearly that he was a Jain in real sense The father of Kalpaka has also been regarded to be a devout Jain[99]

The Jainas tell us that all the ministers of the Nandas were his descendants During the time of the last Nanda, the Jain church was governed by two high priests, Sambhutavijya and Bhadrabahu[100] At this time Sagadala was the minister[101] who had two sons, Sthulabhadra and Sriyaka After the death of Sagadala, Nandas offered the ministership to his elder son Sthulabhadra, but the latter refused and took *diksha* and joined the order of Sambhutavijaya,[102] the sixth pontiff of the Jain church The ministership was finally given to his brother Sriyaka, who was already in the kings' office

**Schism in Jainism after Mahavira :**

Absolutely nothing is known concerning the fate of the Jain community for more than one hundred and fifty years after the death of Mahavira beyond the very scanty conclusions which may be drawn from the legendary tales related by later Jain writers During the period, the church organisation grows more complex

Between the death of Mahavira and the accession of Chandragupta Maurya, there flourished six heads of the church In Jainacarya tradition, Gautam Gandhara (Indrabhuti) became the spiritual leader after Mahavira,[103] who attained salvation after twelve years [104]

The Svetambaras, on the other hand, say that Sudharma Swami (Sudharmacarya) became the head of the Jain community[105] and held that position for twelve years, till he attained salvation at the age of 100 This difference of informations shows the dividing tendency of Jain community just after the death of Mahavira about which the Buddhist texts[106] also have mentioned Sudharma Swami recited the *Uvasagadasao,* the seventh Anga of the Jainas [106A]

The next successor was Jambuswami[107] and he remained the leader of the Jain church for fortyfour years He died at a time which nearly coincided with the accession of the Nandas [108] Sudharma was teacher of Jambu[109] and is considered to be the originator of canonical texts As Jambu was the last *Kevalin* of the line, the canonic texts left by the last two is considered to be above any objection All the three were, like Mahavira, *Arhat kevalins* and they attained *moksa* or salvation Both the Digambara and the Svetambara accounts are in perfect agreement as to their respective names, character and total period of their life [110]

After the above three *Kevalins,* the following five *Srutakevalis*-Nandi, Nandimitra, Aparajita, Gobardhana and Bhadrabahu[111] become leaders in succession respectively and the total period of their leadership covers one hundred years

All these Jain spiritual leaders were born in the sacred land of Bihar, though the sphere of their religious preaching extended widely beyond its modern political boundary Though they travelled

throughout India and preached Jain religion and Jain philosophy, Magadh was their main centre of activities Rajgriha, Champa and Pataliputra were the important places where they delivered sermons [112] Though the headquarters of these leaders of the church continued to be in Bihar, there can be no doubt that Jainism made a slow but steady progress in modern Bihar and adjoining areas during these years

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# JAINISM IN MAURYAN PERIOD
# (325 B.C. - 188 B.C.)

**A short Political History of the Period :**

The foreign attack on the North-Western portion of India, political disunity within the empire and the oppressive rule of the Nandas, made the empire of the Nandas so much unpopular that its stability was shaken and it was this condition which brought the Mauryas on the throne of India Chandragupta Maurya, who ascended the throne of Magadha in circa 324 B C ,[1] not only brought back the political integration, administrative consolidation and national pride and progress, but even wiped out the political and military humiliation as well

**Lineage of Chandragupta Maurya :**

There are controversies among the scholars over the lineage of the first ruler of the dynasty namely Chandragupta The Indian traditions are confused and are not in a position to give any definite evidence According to the *Mudrarakshasa*[2] Chandragupta was a member of the family of Nanda The annotator of the *Vishnu Purana* texts[3], calls the son of Nanda by Mura and that is why the members of the dynasty are called Mauryas The commentator of the *Mudrarakshasa* Dhundhiraya[4] says that Chandragupta was son of Maurya who was the son of Nanda king Sarvarthasiddhi by Mura, daughter of Sudra

Some have tried to corroborate the theory of the Sudra origin of Chandragupta Maurya, that form Mahapadma Nanda onwards

the rulers of Magadha were Sudras One text of the *Markandeya Purana* colours the Mauryas as *asuras* [5] It seems clear, after examining the facts, that due to patronage of Jainism and Buddhism by the Mauryas, the orthodox Brahmana authors brand them of low origin

The theory which puts Chandragupta to *sudra* origin stands discredited The texts supporting this theory are late in date The *Puranas* statement that kings would be of *sudra* origin after Mahapadma refers to his successors Besides, the *Puranas* neither mention Mura nor about any blood relationship between Chandragupta and the Nandas Had he had any blood relationship with the Nandas, he would not have advised a foreigner, like Alexender, to attack the Nanda ruler, while there was no certainty that the attacker would have handed over the annexed territories to him for nothing The word Maurya cannot be derived from 'Mura' the alleged mother of Chandragupta Kautilya cannot prefer a *sudra* king at the place of another *sudra* Nanda

The classical accounts do not actually enumerate Chandragupta as a member of low caste, but speak of him to have been born in a humble life [6] Plutarch[7] says that Chandragupta stated to Alexender about the mean origin of Nanda king It can easily be assumed as such that Chandragupta would not have adversely commented on the mean origin of the Nanda king, had he himself been of such origin The classical accounts only say that he was born of humble parents and not born in the purple

Here, The Jain traditions help us by throwing some welcome light on this problem A Jain tradition says that 'he was born of the daughter of the chief, of a village community, which was known as rarers of royal peacocks, (Mayura posaka) [8] The Buddhist traditions[9] take the Mauryas to be *kshatriyas* and according to the commentary on the *Mahavamsa*, Asoka was a member of

the *kshatriya* Moriya clan Thus, there is no doubt that the Mauryas were *ksatriyas* and they did not belong to the low origin of the *sudras* [10]

So far the date of Chandragupta Maurya's accession is concerned, we won't go deep into this controversy, except having the idea that he snatched the throne from the Nandas, which happened probably one hundred and sixtyfive years after the *nirvana* of Mahavira and a few years after the demise of foreign attack of Alexender

**Successors of Chandragupta Maurya:**

Chandragupta left behind him his son and successor Bindusara,[11] who was, in turn, followed by his son Asoka

But there is great controversy over the name of the successor of Asoka and several names are there in the fray, like Kunala[12] Jalauka,[13] Samprati[14] and Dasaratha, making the picture all confused But the description of the last days of Asoka gives a plausibility that after the death of Asoka, the central authority became weak, and princes, who were Viceroys in different parts of the empire, might have acted as independent kings [15] It is supposed that perhaps the empire was divided immediately after Asoka's death between his grand sons, Dasaratha taking the eastern, and Samprati, the western provinces

According to the *Matsya Purana,*[16] Dasaratha reigned for eight years This would suggest that he died without an heir, being old enough to come to the throne without necessitating a regency of some sort The *Vayu* and *Brahmanda Puranas*[17] speak of Kunala ruling for eight years He must have died at about the same time when Dasaratha died, consequent to which Samprati, then ruling in the west, might have successfully reigned the throne of Pataliputra, thus uniting the empire again

The fact that Jain traditions refer to building activities of Samprati in Rajasthan and further west,[18] and the mention of the Jain sources that he ruled from Pataliputra and also from Ujjain[19] show that he ruled over the entire empire both in the east as well as in the west [20]

## POSITION OF JAINISM DURING THIS PERIOD

### Chandragupta Maurya's Leaning towards Jainism:

With the accession of Chandragupta Maurya to the throne of Pataliputra,[21] Jainism assumed a new phase in the Indian history He was regarded by the Jain texts where they claim him to be born in a high family of *kshatriya* caste This statement shows that the Jain texts have a liberal attitude towards Chandragupta [22]

There are concrete pieces of evidence to lead one to the conclusion that Chandragupta Maurya had a great leaning for the cult of Jainism A Jain tradition related in the *Tiloyapannati*[23] and *Rajavalikatha* claims him to be a Jain The Jain texts show Mahavira preaching among the Moriyas and while we see Chandragupta's clan, we find him also to be the same clan (the Moriyas) One of the chief apostles of Mahavira was a Moriyaputta and there were also many other Moriyaputtas who became his disciples [24] The Jainas always treat the great emperor as having been a Jain like Bimbisara, and no adequate reason seems to exist for discrediting their belief Chandragupta has been styled as a Jain king along with Hinasitala in a geneological list of Hindu kings as well [25] According to Thomas Edward, "That Chandragupta was a member of the Jain community is taken by their writers as a matter of course, and treated as a known fact which needed neither argument nor demonstration the testimony of Megasthanese would likewise seem to imply that Chandragupta submitted to the devotional teaching of the *Sramanas* as opposed to the doctrine of the Brahmanas [26]

The Jain monks are frequently seen and mentioned within the empire of Chandragupta not only by Indians, but by the Greek historians as well Megasthanese, the Greek envoy to Chandragupta's court, mentions of *Sarmanas* (Sramanas) in his empire He also says that Chandragupta submitted to the devotional teaching of the Sramanas[27] as opposed to the doctrines of the Brahmanas

The Jain religion was undoubtedly extremely weighty in Magadha during the time of the later Saisunagas, the Nandas and the Mauryas The fact that Chandragupta Maurya won the throne by the contrivance of a learned Brahman is not inconsistent with the supposition that Jainism was the royal faith Jainas habitually employ Brahmanas for their domestic ceremonies, and in the *Mudrarakshasa,* a Jain ascetic is mentioned as being a special friend of the minister Rakshasa, who served first the Nanda and then the new sovereign [28]

**Twelve Years famine and Abdication of Chandragupta Maurya·**

The great event of Chandragupta Maurya's reign was the forecast of a twelve-years famine[29] by *srutakevalin* Bhadrabahu, who, during those days was the head of the Jain church [30] According to the Jain text *Rajvaliya Katha,* the king saw sixteen dreams and asked Bhadrabahu to interpret the dreams The latter explained all the dreams and according to the last one, he predicted a famine of twelve years

The copper plate inscription of Sohagaura[31] in the Gorakhpur district and Mahasthana inscriptions[32] in the Bogra District[33] give some evidences of this famine and describe the famine precautions taken by the affected persons in the Gangetic belt. These inscriptions are in Brahmi script and have been regarded to be of the early years of the Mauryas and inscribed during the time of Chandragupta Maurya

Fearing the difficulties and heardships consequent to this prophecy, a large number of Jains[34] moved towards the South[35] including Bhadrabahu, [36] leaving the old, weak, and invalid monks in charge of Sthulabhadra Chandragupta, an adherent of the Jaina faith, following his *guru* Bhadrabahu, abdicated his throne[37] in favour of his son Simhasena[38] and left for the South Both the teacher and pupil lived at a foot hill for some years after which Bhadrabahu died[39] in the orthodox Jain way *sallekhana,* which means death through total rejection of food Chandragupta being the main disciple there, performed his funeral After this event, Simhasena's son Bhaskar (Chandragupta's grandson) came to South India, respected Chandragupta and erected a town named Belgola [40]

**Literary evidence regarding Sravanbelgola tradition**

Chandragupta Maurya lived at Sravanbelgola for several years in a cave, worshipping the foot-prints of his departed preceptor, Bhadrabahu, and finally committed religious suicide[41] following the Jain fashion [42] According to the Tibetan account, Kautilya saw the abdication of Chandragupta Maurya [43]

In addition to the above, the tradition also finds mention with minor variations in a number of documents, both literary and epigraphic This is corroborated in *Brihathakatha kosa* by Harisena dated in c 931 A D , Ratnanandi's *Bhadrabahucharita* of about 1450 A D , the Kannada works *Munivamsabhudaya* of c 1680 A D and the *Rajavaliyakatha* All these works agree to the main facts starting from the famine of Bihar and migration of Jains towards the South after the death of Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta at Chandragiri hill in the 4th century B C

**Archaeological and Epigraphical Remains:**

The two hills, between which the village Belgola is situated,

have also significant names. The bigger one (Dodda-betta in Kannada)[44] is called Vindhyagiri, which name the migrating people might have brought with them as they came from the North The smaller hill (Chikka Betta in Kannada)[45] is called Chandragiri This latter one is said to derive its affiliation from the fact that Chandragupta was the first of the saints who lived and performed penance there [46] On the Chandragiri, we have fine temples in Dravidian architectural style

On this same hill is a cave named after Bhadrabahu and also a shrine called Chandragupta Basti, as it was erected by Chandragupta [47] Moreover, the facade of this Basti or temple, which is in the form of a perforated screen, contains ninety sculptured scenes depicting events of the life of Bhadrabahu [48]

Several inscriptions of Sravanbelgola refer to this tradition also [49] The whole area is spotted with inscriptions, nearly 500 in number, which range in date from 600 A D almost to the present times The oldest of these inscriptions is of about 600 A D [50] which associates 'the pair (*yugma*) Bhadrabahu along with Chandragupta' Two inscriptions of about 900 A D , found near the Gautam Kshetra of the river Kaveri at Seringapattan, describe the hill at Sravana Belgola as having its summit marked by the impress of the feet of Bhadrabahu and Munipati Chandragupta [51] Two inscriptions[52] of the year 1128 and 1169 A D mention Bhadrabahu 'Srutakevalin' and Chandragupta, who, according to which, had acquired such righteous merit that they were worshipped by the forest deities Another inscription[53] of the year 1433 A D speaks of Yatindra Bhadrabahu and his disciple Chandragupta, the fame of whose penance spread far and wide

**The Jain Philosophers of South India:**

The story of the migration is attested by other incidents

and references as well We have got accounts of a group of philosophers called 'Brachmanas[54] (Brahmanas), who were found in South India during those periods and such passages have been quoted in an early Christian text, the Pseudo Origin's *Philosophia,* which have been dated to the third or fourth century A D This group of *Brahmanas* is said to subsist on gathered and fallen fruits They lived in the region of Tungabhadra river, but they wandered about completely naked, as they believed the body to be merely a covering for the soul There follows a passage containing a very muddled accounts of the mysticism of the words used by this sect Due to the references to god being very frequent with them, it is possible that there may have been a colony of *Brahman* ascetics The description, however, tallies far more closely with that of the Jains living in Southern India The ban on eating food cooked by fire and living, instead, on fruit is quite in keeping with certain orthodox Jain practices [55] The fact of their nakedness agrees with the belief of the Digambara sect of the Jinas Besides, this groups of ascetics had used the practice of 'remaining for a whole day motionless in one fixed attitude[56] This posture of *ubbhatthika* is very much the same described in the Pali text [57] The location of this group at Tungabhadra again recalls us of the last day of Chandragupta and Bhadrabahu in this region

**The Pataliputra Council·**

The Jain legends tell us that all the monks did not migrate from Magadha to the South and some preferred to remain in their old land Apprehending the danger that could threaten the loss and distortion of the original teachings of Mahavira, Sthulabhadra,[58] who according to the Svetambara tradition, assumed the leadership of the *samgha* in Magadha, summoned a Council of Jain *munis* for the compliation and rearrangement of the teachings of Mahavira which were preserved in the *Purvas* The famine

conditions had perhaps made impossible for the monks to recollect and study their texts during those critical period This council was summoned in the early fourth century B C at Pataliputra, the modern city of Patna [59]

The Pataliputra Council is referred to in the *Avasyakacurni*[60] of Jinadasagani Mahattara, who flourished in the second half of the 7th century A D [61] The Svetambara writer Haribhadra, who lived in the middle of the 8th century A D, has also referred to this council [62] Saints who remembered the whole, or only particular portions of the *Agamas*, narrated them before the sacred assembly, which, in its turn, accepted the Agamas with alterations, additions and subtraction, whatever and wherever necessary

In the conference, eleven Jain *Angas* were recollected, but the twelve Anga *Dristivada* (Ditthivada) was still missing [63] It was the twelfth *Anga* alone which contained the fourteen *Purvas* It seems that it was only Sthulabhadra[64] who claimed to have learnt and mastered all the *Purvas* Even then he knew only the ten *Purvas* along with their meanings and four *Purvas* without the meaning, from Bhadrabahu [65] The final effect of the whole incident resulted in the last four *Purvas*, and so only ten *Purvas* and *Angas* were theoratically incorporated in the Jain canons at the conference [66] Though the *Agamas* were finally reduced in writing at Valabhi council held under the presidentship of Devardhigani Ksanasramana in about the middle of the 5th century A D ,[67] the credit of preserving the *Agamas* may be alloted to the Pataliputra council as well [68] The language of the canon is known as *Arsha* or *Ardhamagadhi*, which Mahavira himself is said to have used during his preachings

The canon fixed by the Pataliputra council which was undoubtedly the first origin of the Siddhanta,[69] was not

acknowledged by those who had returned to their native land from the South [70] Being dissatisfied with this attempt of the council, they went to the length of disowning the Canon and declared that the whole group of the *Angas* and *Purvas* were lost for ever These persons criticised the Magadhan Jainas who had started using white garment and thus the divisions of the Digambaras and Svetambaras started taking shape which became permanent feature of the religion later on

A doubt has been raised about the popularity of Jainism at Pataliputra at that time, as we don't have any archaeological or epigraphical record of that period referring to the Pataliputra council "It seems that Jainism wielded no appreciable influence, if at all, with the rulers and people of those regions in those times "[71]

But the genuineness of this doubt lessons when we find the quarrel of the two groups over the findings of this Council All the rulers of the prevailing dynasty gave much importance to this religion and so the question of its being less popular is far from the truth

The Mauryan administrative institution and society were very much influenced by the laws of Jainism also It is stated that Mahavira hated and condemned slavery and took food from a slave at Kausambi to show his non-alignment with any *varna* of the society [72] Megasthanese who came India during the days of the Mauryas, except other things, describes of Indian society and says that he did not see any slave here He further supposes that all were free in the society Side by side, while we examine the Mauryan Constitution, we see that the laws ordained that no one among them would, under all circumstances, be a slave Now, as it is clear, if Chandragupta Maurya got the idea of the eradication

of slavery from the preachings of Mahavira, then where lies the doubt that Jainism had no influence on Mauryan society and administration

**Kautilya and Jainism:**

Coming next to Kautilya,[73] the minister of Chandragupta Maurya, the Jainas hold him to be a follower of their own cult [74] The ancient Jain text *Avasyakacurni* has preserved the life of Chanakya in details According to it, he was son of a devout Jain *Brahmin Sraman* named Chani and the name of his mother was Chaneswari,[75] who lived at a place called Chanaya [76] They ancestrally belonged to Brahman caste, but were Jain *Sravakas* from the religious side Even today, we find several Brahmans in the South, who are traditionally follower of Jain faith [77]

There goes a very interesting legend in the Buddhist records regarding the birth of Chanakya or Kautilya It has been narrated that he was born with all his teeth in his mouth [78] Some Jain *sravakas* were present at the time of his birth and his father asked them to forecast the future of the boy They told him that the newly born child would be a distinguished and famous person and as he became the minister of Chandragupta Maurya, the forecast came to be true Acarya Haribhadra Suri has given more attention to the life of Chanakya He says that the presence of the Jain *Sravakas* at Chanakya's house at the time of his birth indicates that his parents were followers of the same cult [79]

The *Avasyakacurni*, while narrating his life shows that he was given fourteen types of education and became a *sravaka* during his youth Hemchandra, the author of *Parisisthaparvan*, has mentioned the Jain pontiff Sambhutavijaya calling Kautilya 'sanghopasaka' He honours Chanakya with the titles like *Pravacanopahasa bhiru*,[80] *Sanghapurusa*[81] and *Nirjarodyata*,[82] which are generally used for

a member of *Sravaka Sangha* He further says that it was Chanakya, who converted Chandragupta Maurya to Jainism and before accepting this new faith, there was a discussion between the king and the prime minister and Chanakya convinced Chandragupta of the Jain principles and ethics which he then gladly accepted [83]

A story of his last days throws some light also on his religious belief It is said that during the ripe age of his life, Chanakya was falsely charged of murdering the king's mother and he felt disrespect in the palace Therefore, he passed on his post to his disciple Radhagupta,[84] took *munidiksa* and started starving himself to death[85] *(ingini marana)* like a true Jain saint [86] The *Bhatta Painna,*[87] *Santharga Painna,*[88] and *Marana Painna*[89] confirm this event of Kautilya's life

Tradition represents the 'wicked minister' as having repented and returned to 'Shookul tirtha' on the banks of the Narbada, where be breathed his last and Chandragupta is also supposed to have accompanied him 'Shookul tirtha' is the exact equivalent of 'Belgola', which in Kanarese means 'White pond' In the inscription found there, it is also called *Dhavalasarasa,* which means 'White lake [90]

The *Arthasastra* also helps us to show the inclination of its writer to the Jain faith References of Gods in the *Samavayanga* like Aparajita, Jayanta, Vijaya and Vijayanta remind us of the four Gods, Aparajita, Aparatihata, Jayanta and Vijayanta mentioned in the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya [91] Kautilya is shown advicing the king to prohibit the slaughter of animals for a fortnight strictly for all four months of the rainy seasons during the period of *Chaturmasya* following the Jain principle of *ahimsa* [92] That Chanakya and his disciple Chandragupta, both were the followers of Jain faith, is really an immortal character of the Mauryan history

**Bindusar's attitude towards the faith of Jainism :**

So far the adherence of Bindusara towards the Jain faith is concerned, the literary traditions do not help us much, as they have done in the case of his predecessor Chandragupta But Bindusara seems to have been aware of the contemporary trends If his father was a partisan of Jainism, Bindusara may well have been partially so to it He may well have first met with this catholicity of religious taste at the court itself when he was a young prince Stevenson also agrees that Bindusara followed the faith of his parents[93] and was under the influence of Chanakya, the son of a Jain *Brahmin* [94] The Jain texts style him as a Jain and entitle him as 'Simhasena' [95] His queen also was very much inclined to the Ajivika monk [96]

Bindusara extended his dominion in south so as to cover at least some portions of the present Karnataka region This was not only a mere act of conquest by him, according to *ksatriya* ambition, but he might have been actuated by filial motive in acquiring Karnataka, a place rendered sacred by the last days of his father Chandragupta He went to South India to worship the holy place where Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta had breathed their last following the Jain rituals It is assumed that he erected several Jain temples at Sravanabelgola On the other hand, the members of various non orthodox sects probably moved quite freely at his court [97] It is stated that some Vedic *Brahmanas* once influenced the king and persuaded him to perform a *yajna* in which animals were to be sacrificed But the Jain *Brahmanas* vanquished them in debate and the king was glad to follow their instructions [98]

The *Divyavadana* records that an Ajivika monk named Pingalavatsa was invited by king Bindusara in connection with the question of Asoka's succession to the throne,[99] who prophesied his greatness [100] The *Mahavamsa*, like borrowing from the old Simhalesa

commentary on the *Majjhima Nikaya*, relates a story which says that a *sraman* named Janasena, was the family priest of the royal house of Bindusara, and that he was a Jain belonging to the Digambara sect [101]

**Jain Religion and Asoka :**

Generally it is said that Asoka was a follower of Buddhism and that he included the main concept of this faith in his personal religion But in his *Dhamma*, we find two different aspects, one centering Buddhism and the other the ethical codes which are true for all religions of all ages In fact, his ethical doctrines are so much prominant in his edicts, that when Asokan study was at its infancy, scholars were for a time at a loss to determine what exactly his personal religion was Asoka's religion was never a sectarian Buddhism and therefore it is not possible or even desirable to give a particular level to his Dharma

The statement that Asoka's *Dharma* was not Buddhism is accepted by Wilson,[102] Macphail,[103] Fleet,[104] Monahan[105] Rev Heras[106] and others [107] Senart after having said that in the *Dhamma*, 'there is nothing exclusively Buddhist makes the following statement, "In my opinion our monuments (Asoka's inscriptions) are witnesses of a stage of Buddhism, sensibly different from that which is developed in later times"[108]

It cannot definitely be said that Asoka was either a staunch Buddhist or a mild Jain But we have definite evidences to prove that he was more or less inclined towards Jainism as well, and the Jainas maintained their place in the then society We can definitely say that they were of no small importance at the time of Asoka The Pillar Edict VII of Asoka specifies three religious sects, namely the Samgha, the Brahmana-Ajivikas and the Niganthas It is worthy of note in this connection that had the Jainas been

without influence and of small numbers, Asoka would hardly have known of them, or at least would not have singled them out from other numerous nameless sects of which he often speakes.[109]

Whenever Asoka wanted to speak of Buddhists alone, he always used the word *Samgha,* but the independent mention of the Nirgranthas[110] shows that these were distinct entities altogether different from the *Samgha* The peaceful existence of this living faith is also supported by the fact when we find no evidence available from his career that he harassed the Jainas [111] Several scholars are of the opinion that during his early life, he was a Jain[112] and later on accepted the Buddhist faith [113]

**Asoka as Viceroy and Jainism ·**

The Simhalesa tradition says that during the life time of his father, when Asoka was Viceroy of Ujjain, he formed connection with a girl of a Jain *sresthin* named Devi[114] who resided at Vidisa or Vedasigiri [115] The *Mahavamsa tika* describes her as a very handsome and accomplished lady and names Deva as her father [116] Though the *Dipavamsa* does not refer to their marriage but affirms that two offsprings came out of their union[117] namely Mahinda (Mahendra) and Sanghamitta (Sanghamitra) It is further said that Devi continued to reside at Vidisa and did not go to his capital Pataliputra even when Asoka seized the throne and the children by her accompanied him to his capital

The fact of Asoka's having been influenced in his early years by the faith of his grandfather Chardragupta, gathers strength from *Ain-I-Akbari,* where Abul Fazl, the accomplished minister of Akbar, has retained in his notice, while referring to the kingdom of Kashmir, three very important entries, of which the first establishes 'that Asoka himself first introduced Jainism into the kingdom of Kashmir '[118] The introduction or recognition of the

Jain creed in Kashmir[119] not only rests upon the sole testimony of the Muhammadan author, but is freely acknowledged in the Brahmanical pages of the *Raja-Tarangini*,[120] a work which, though finally complied and put together only in 1148 A D , relies, in this section of its history, upon the more archaic writings of Padma-Mihira and Sri Chavillakara

**Did Asoka Kill Jainas?**

In a passage of the *Asoka vadana*, Asoka has been shown a staunch Buddhist and anti Jain While referring to Asoka's younger brother,[121] it says that the king ordered that all the Nirgranthas in the Buddhist monasteries be killed, because he considered them heretics His younger brother being mistaken for one was also killed This made Asoka aware of the folly of his order and it was revoked

But this story cannot be relied upon for one cause or another It seems correct that in an effort to portray the emperor's zeal for Buddhism, the chroniclers have indicated that he was intolerant to all except the orthodox Buddhism This suspicion of deviationists on the part of Asoka is not in keeping with his plea for tolerance as stressed in the edicts

**The Religion of Asoka as described in the Edicts**

Dr J F Fleet held that the *Dhamma* of Asoka inclucated in the rock and pillar edicts was in no way the Buddhist *Dhamma*,[122] but simply *raya-dhamma*, that is, a code of duties prescribed for kings[123] In these edicts, Buddha is not mentioned at all[124] and the *samgha* only once and in such a way as to place on a par with other creeds The philosophical principles of Buddhism like thefour grand truths, the eightfold faith, chain of causation and the idea of *nirvana* etc get no place in the inscriptions of Asoka[125] The object of these edicts was thus 'not to propagate Buddhism

or any other particular religion, but to proclaim the determination of Asoka to govern his kingdom righteously and kindly in accordance with the duty of pious kings '[126] In other words, the term *dharma,* used in the rock and pillar edicts, is the 'ordinary *dharma* of kings, which is laid down in the *Manava-dharmasastra*[127] as one of the topics of that work '

In his religion, Asoka includes the ideals of all the religions, while the edicts show that he was nearer to the ideas and principles of Jainism than to those of others, including Buddhism The secondary name *(biruda)* of the king has been ascribed as *Devanama-piya-piyadassi*[128] in the pillar edicts of Asoka

Now, it involves a more than remarkable coincidence that this same term of *Devanamapiya* or 'Beloved of the gods' should prove to have been an established and conventional title among the Jainas [129]

Hoernle and Pischel also note that *Deva Anupriya-Devananampriya* are frequently found in Jain literature [130] Even Bana's Sanskrit drama *Harsacharita* twice uses it in a good sense as an honorific [131]

But in the Bhabru edict of the twenty second year of Asoka, in which he has used the word 'Dharma' for the first time in favour of Buddhism his surname is only 'Piyadasi' and not 'Devanamapiya' He might have been influenced by Buddhism in between this period [132]

Sometimes we are told that Asoka convened the third Buddhist Council in the seventeenth or eighteenth year after his anointment and then dispatched missionaries to propagate the faith in the border countries

But there is nothing in that assertion In the records of Asoka,

there is no mention of the Council, and it is at least difficult to find fairly any allusion to missions of the kind described in the books And neither by the *Dipavamsa* nor by the *Mahavamsa* nor by Buddhaghosh, are the occurances in question attributed to him The three authorities agree that it was Moggaliputta-Tissa who convened the Council and sent out the missionaries Asoka is not mentioned by them in connection with the missions at all

Scholars are of the opinion that the principles of non-violence of Asoka were taken more from the Jain order Killing of several species of animals and birds were forbidden[133] and burning of forest intended for violence was restricted Rock Edict I mentions that 'many hundred thousand of living beings were formerly slaughtered everyday in the kitchen of Priyadarsi but now only three living creatures are killed daily for the sake of curry Even this animal is not slaughtered regularly These three living beings too shall not be killed in future '[134]

Asoka announced fiftysix days in a year on which killing of animals and birds were forbidden [135] Most of these pious days are the same which have been given in the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya[136] and in Jain traditions

Description of various types of *samajas* are to be found in Pali literature, and the Brahmajalasutta of the *Digha Nikaya*[137] refers, according to Buddhaghosa, the assemblies in which animal fights were arranged, and this was no doubt, very objectionable from the point of his theory of *ahimsa* The Rock Edict I informs us that under the guidance of his principle, Asoka forbade holding of such *samajas* or social gatherings in which slaughter or torture of the animals were practised [138] Simultaneously in the same Edict, he enjoins for non-violence towards 'living beings, proper treatment

of relatives and *Brahmanas* and *Sramanas'*

**The Concept of sin *(papa)* of the Edicts of Asoka :**

We can recollect the Jain concept of sin *(papa)* from the Edicts of Asoka containing his preachings on *Dhamma* Asoka, while dealing with the negative side of his *Dhamma,*[139] mentions the word *asinava*[140] This word is similar to *asava* or *asrava* of Buddhism It, therefore, seems at first sight that *asinava* of Asoka is the same as *asava (asrava)* of Buddhism, which has precisely the same significance

But the word *asinava* does not seem to denote the types of *asavas* or *asrava* propounded by the Buddhists[141] While the Buddhists have three kinds of *asavas* viz *karma asava* (sensual pleasure), *bhava-asava* (lore of existence) and *avijj asava* (defilement of ignorance)[142] Asoka, however, mentions five ways leading to *asinava* which are of an entirely different nature and are quite unknown to the Buddhist scriptures[143] These five *asinavas* are *Chandiya* (violence), *nithuliya* (cruelty), *kodha* (anger), *mana* (concept) and *isya* (envy) The second group of *asavas* shows that Asoka did not adopt the *asavas* of Buddhism, rather it was different

Now, where from he could have borrowed his *asinava*? "The Jainas possess a tern *anhaya",* observes Buhler,[144] "which exactly corresponds to *asinava,* and is derived, like the latter, from *a-snu"*[145] *Anhaya* is used in the well known Jain work *Acharanga sutta*[146] and translated as sins by Prof Jacobi[147] And as *asinava*[148] or *anhaya* is used as an equivalent to sin *(papa),* the Jain source of borrowing becomes clear Another word *parisava* used in the Rock Edict X is as well placed on the same level with *anhaya* or demerit[149]

In the sacred books of the Jainas, eighteen types of sins

and fortytwo kinds of *asravas*[150] have been enumerated Of these, four types of sins *(papa)* are common in both of the said list They are *krodha, mana, maya* and *lobha,* collectively known as *kashayas,* two of which are included in the edicts[151] of king Asoka The word *isya* of the inscription of Asoka is the same as the *irshya* or *dvesha* of the Jain canonical works, dealing with the categories of *papa* Though the terms *chamadiya* and *nithultya* are not known to the Jain works, yet a similar idea can be traced from the word *himsa,* a kind of *asrava,* which implies both of these terms Hence the use of *asinava* with the three passions, i e *krodha, mana* and *isya* at least of the Jainas, are enough to confirm the adoption of some of the psychological concepts of Jainism[152] by Asoka

The adotption and assimilation of the Jainistic ideas by Asoka could further be confirmed by the terminology he employs when he speaks of the various kinds of life He uses such words as *jiva, pana, bhuta* and *jata* [153] Do all these not remind us of the phraseology *pana, bhuya, jiva* and *satta,* which are employed, for instance, in the *Acaranga Sutta*[154] of the Jainas? Of course it is possible to content that he never uses all of these words together, and may not have, therefore, intended to distinguish among them But it cannot be derived that Asoka tried to draw a line of differentiation between *bhuta* and *prana,* when he enumerates his ethical practices [155] The Buddhist literature no where distinguishes between *prana* and *bhuta,* where as Jain scriptures not only distinguish these two but also distinguish them from *jiva* and *satta*

The assimilation of these conceptual ideas of the Jainas by king Asoka [156] shows that their ethical and philosophical concepts were highly developed and honoured by the king

**The mention of Sramanas by Asoka :**

Asoka has mentioned two important classes, the *Brahmanas* and the *Sramanas* and says that there is no country except Yonas, where these (two) classes do not exist [157]

Now, who these *Sramanas* were? Though a few scholars take its meaning as Buddhist monks, we do not find special reason for such restrictions *Sramanas* simply denote an ascetic or monk, and the Jainas used this term even before the Buddhists appropriated it It has been used so in the Greek annals also An ancient vow of the Jain gives the real meaning of this word, which runs like this 'I take the twelfth vow, the *Atithisamvibhagavrata,* by wich I promise to give *Sramana* or *Nirgrantha* any of the fourteen things which they can accept without blame '

**Dharma-mahamattaras to look after the Nirgranthas also :**

The earliest authentic information of the Nirgranthas or the Jainas is furnished by the VIIth Pillar Edict[158] of Asoka from the Delhi Topra region He not only interested himself in Buddhism which he professed in his later years, but took care in a fatherly way of all other religions

In the thirteenth year of his reign, he, for the first time, appointed *Dharma-maha-mattaras* (Superintendents of religion) to supervise Buddhists, Brahmanas, Ajivikas, Nirgranthas and other sects[159] and ordered them to promote harmony and mutual appreciation among all sects He also proclaimed that followers of all sects may dwell in all places without distincition [160] The VIIth Pillar Edict describes the imperial policy for the propagation of *Dharma* and especially the duties of the officers for public morales (dharma-maha-mattaras), who were 'ordered to busy themselves with the affairs of the Samgha, likewise others were ordered to busy themselves also with the Brahmanas (and) Ajivikas, others

were ordered to busy themselves also with the Nirgranthas, others were ordered to busy themselves also with various (other) sects, (thus) different Mahamattaras (are busying themselves) specially with different (congregations)' [161]

**Dedication of caves to Ajivikas :**

Initially Jain and Buddhist saints lived a secluded life in the natural caves but later on artificial caves were carved out from the hills for their use The caves served as suitable places for meditation of the recluses and they were really the means of protection against heat and cold, wind and sunlight, ferocious animals and showers of rain

Asoka is also said to have dedicated four caves to Ajivikas in the Barabar hills[162] at Gaya, three of which contain Asokan inscriptions These three are Sudama (Nayagrodha),[163] Vishwa Jhopari[164] or Vishwa Bhedi[165] and Karan Chaupar (also called Supiyaguha) [166] Of the three Barabar caves with dedicatory inscriptions, the first two were given to the Ajivikas in the twelfth year[167] of Asoka's consecration and the third one in the nineteenth year [168] which shows that the caves were excavated and donated by the king around 258 B C and 251 B C respectively [169] The Sudama Cave seems to be the earliest of the series

**Identification of the Ajivikas :**

Some eminent scholars have pointed out that the Ajivika cult was much nearer to the Jainas and when we go through all the aspects of the two cults, the hypothesis really looks convincing The identification of the Ajivikas with the Jainas is mostly accepted by a majority of scholars, like Hoernle,[170] Smith,[171] Rice,[172] C J Shah[173] and others [174] This sect in the prehistoric time seems to have been sometimes Saiva[175] in character, sometimes Brahmanical[176] and sometimes non-Brahmanical The non-Brahmanical Ajivikas

were probably those who were associated and even connected with the Jainas and the Brahmanical with the 'Maskari Parivrajikas' described by Panini

From the fact that the Jain scriptures maintain that originally Gosala was a disciple *(sisya)* of Mahavira,[177] it would appear that, beyond his determinism with its practical imagination, there was, in the main, no difference between these doctrines and those of Mahavira This inclusion is also suggested by the statement of the *Jain Bhagvati Sutra*[178] that Gosala's system was taken from the eight *Mahanimittas,* a portion of the *Purvas* These *Purvas* or originals were believed to be the original sacred texts taught by Mahavira himself to his disciples [179]

Buddhaghosa in his *Dhammapada* Commentary[180] describes an ascetic who knocks the doors of all the sects including the Ajivikas and the Niganthas But the same work refers indiscriminately to Nagga-Samana, Ajivika and Acelaka [181] Similarly, the *Divyavadana,*[182] in the story of Asoka, seems to use the term Ajivika and Nigantha (Nirgrantha) synonymously

Silanka (c 876 A D ) in his commentary on *Sutrakrtanga* says 'they are the Ajivikas who follow the doctrine of Gosala, or Botikas' (Digambaras) [183] On the basis of this reference, Hoernle[184] rightly concluded that the later Ajivikas merged in the Digambara Jainas He says 'Silanka states that the reference is to the Ajivikas or Digambaras' [185] Seeing that, in his comment on another passage of the same work, he identifies the Ajivikas with the Terasiyas [186] And hence to Silanka, the words Ajivika, Digambara and the Terasiyas were all variants of the same term denoting the same order of ascetic [187] Basham, too, appears to support this view when he says that there is hardly any 'material and epigraphic evidence about the Ajivikas in the Northern India after Dasaratha' [188] So

far the South India is concerned, it survived in modern Andhra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu region until the 14th century A D and that the original atheism of Makkhali Gosala merged in that of the Digambara Jainas [189]

Hoernle[190] identifies the Ajivikas with the Digambara Jainas and in the support of his theory, he refers to Halayudha (950 A D )[191] who enumerates a large number of names of the two Jain divisions, the Svetambara (white clay ones) and the Digambaras (sky clothed, i e naked), or as he calls them, the Svetambaras and Digambaras The latter, he says, are also known as the Ajivik, which is only a concise form of Ajivikas It is thus evident that the terms Niggantha and Ajivika denote the two Jain orders which are known to us as Svetambaras and Digambaras [192]

Due to the close association of Jainism with the Ajivikism, even the Pali literature could not make a clear distinction between the Nirgranthas and the Ajivikas The *Sutta Nipata* distinguishes the Ajivikas from other sects, where as the *Majjhima Nikaya* includes all the heretical teachers in the general category of Ajivikas

Both the Ajivikas and the Nirgranthas hold that penalty for a sinful life must, sooner or later, be paid, so that the life to come may be free for enjoyment In this way, their practices were ascetic Fasting, silence, immovability and burning themselves upto the neck, were their ways of undergoing penance Besides, they discarded all clothes and cultivated decent habits, took food on the palms of their hands and were vegetarians [193] This statement, undoubtedly, gives an idea of the similarity between the Ajivikas and the Digambaras

The Chinese and Japanese Buddhist literature classes the Ashibikas (i e Ajivikas) with the Nikendabaras or Nirgranthas, as practising several penance [194]

The tradition recorded in *Manimekhalai*[195] states that the Ajivikas were a sect of the Jainas In a land grant of the South India made by Chola king Rajaraja,[196] the identity of the Ajivikas with that of the Jainas, and particularly with Digambaras, has been made

Dr C J Shah[197] also supports the above idea and opines that the Ajivika sect merged in the Jain fold in the Pre-Christian eras in Northern India In his own words 'As a sect, the Ajivikas practically disappeared from India by the end of the second century B C, though we find some such reference to it in the literature of the later period, as in Varahamihir, Silanka's commentary on *Sutrakrtanga*, Halayudha's *Abhidhan Ratnamala*, and in the inscriptional record on the walls of the Perumal temples at Paygaic near Virinchipuram All these references are not directly connected with the Ajivikas, nor are they in any way, pure Ajivika reference In many a place the term Ajivika is used for the Digambara sect of the Jainas "[198]

From the above facts, it has been made clear that the Ajivikas were divided into two orders-one Brahmanical, and the other, non-Brahmanical The non-Brahmanical Ajivikas are believed to have been connected with the Jainas So, it is very much probable that Asoka excavated the rock caves at Barabar for non-Brahmanicals also who were none other than the followers of Mahavira It is supposed that the Brahmanical and the non-Brahmanical Ajivikas lived side by side at Barabar, just as the Buddhists, Brahmans and Jainas did in caves at Ellora [199] On the basis of the above facts, the dedication of the Barabar caves to the Ajivika *munis* can be put in the Jain historical tradition as well

**Asoka did not turn a Buddhist :**

Though Buddhism widely spread during the regin of Asoka's

religious toleration, we don't have any testimony to say that he became a Buddhist monk In the Minor Rock Edict I, Asoka uses the word *Sangha Upayi (te)* or *Upete* or *Upayate* or *Upayata* or *Upagata*, which is supposed to mean that he joined the monkish order or became a monk But really it means that for more than two and a half years, he was a lay disciple *(Upasaka)* and had not exerted well, but since more than a half year he visited the *Samgha*, he exerted greatly The account of I-tsing that he saw an image of Asoka in the robe of a Buddhist monk[200] cannot be relied upon, as it is uncorroborated and is an evidence of more than nine hundred years after the real event As a matter of fact, all the edicts of Asoka breathe the spirit of an emperor and responsibility and they certainly don't suggest at all the preaching of a high priest for converting non believers to his faith Besides, there is no basis to substantiate the story in the *Divyavadana* that Asoka, towards the end of his life, renounced the empire and turned a monk [201] Pillar Edict VII was issued in the twentyseventh year when Asoka was very much a king and so the statement in Minor Rock Edict I Samghaupata' does not mean that Asoka became a monk, and there is no evidence in early Indian Buddhism that a monk combined in himself the role and title of the king

The prevailing idea that Asoka was a Buddhist, encouraged him, and he lastly became a Buddhist monk, is nothing but an exaggeration In his public policy announcements, he never showed himself to be an ardent Buddhist missionary trying to spread the religion (Buddhism) by royal authority He followed a policy of religious toleration and gave respects and gifts to other religious sects as well This is very much clear from the VIIth Rock Edict which permits members of all sects to reside within his empire for meditation and worship [202] Side by side, he prohibits his Dhamma Mahamattaras from destroying or damaging any *Samgha* [203] Thus

R K. Mookerjee is very right while he observes "the Dhamma of the Edicts is not any particular Dharma or religious system, but the moral law independent of any caste or creed, the *sara* or essence of all religions [204]

**Samprati, the patron of Jainism :**

So far the enthusiasm of Samprati towards this faith is concerned, it can be said that he is one of the leading stars of the Jain history in the North India He was a staunch supporter and follower of the Jain religion[205] and showed great zeal in the propagation of this faith "In the matter of propagation of the Jain faith, Jain records speak as highly of Samprati as the Buddhist records do of Asoka [206] He was converted to Jainism by the great Svetambara leader of the Magadha branch[207] of Jainism named Suhasthin,[208] after which he gave the religion both active support as a ruler, and encouragement in other ways He led with great devotion religious festivals and processions in honour of the *Arhats* during the stay of Suhasthin in Ujjain [209]

Samprati is said to have erected Jain temples throughout within his empire [210] "For the propagation of Jainism, he constructed one and a quarter crore Jain temples, two thousand rest houses and eleven thousand *Vapikas* and *pucca* wells "[211] He founded Jain monasteries even in non-Aryan countries and almost all ancient Jain temples or monuments of unknown origin are ascribed by the popular voice to Samparti [212]

It may also be noted that all the Jain monuments of Rajasthan and Gujarat, whose builder is not known, are attributed to Samparti, which stand in contrast to the fact of the absense of any of his monuments in eastern part of India This clearly shows that during his time even Western India was the heart of Jainism and possibly he was a governor

there before he ascended the throne of Pataliputra

Many scholars are of the view that several inscriptions which have been till now wrongly accepted to be of Asoka, may be ascribed to Samprati The reason behind it is that those inscriptions bearing the name *'Devanamapiyassa Piyadassin laza'* (the Priyadarsin king of the God) are not ascribed to Asoka, as he took for himself the title *Devanampiya*[213] only, and it was Samprati who used *Devanamapiyassa Priyadarsin* for himself and never gives his real name Samprati on any of his inscriptions[214] He is said to have erected *stupas* and temples at the birth place of Sambhavanatha, which were later on destroyed by Allauddin Khalzi[215] He is said to have constructed Jain temples and *stupas* at Benaras and Allahabad, the eastern portion of the present Uttar Pradesh, which was under the very control of Samprati

Besides this, due to the same title of Asoka and Samprati, several inscriptions and tombs erected by Samprati have been taken to be made by Asoka and we are misled to a great extent in giving real credit to Samprati for his works for Jainism

Samprati is credited for not only making Jainism popular within his empire, but outside it as well[216] He called the neighbouring kings and requested them to embrace and patronise his creed, so that not only in his kingdom but also in the adjacent countries the monks could practice their religion[217] He sent out missionaries as far as South India to preach Jainism in the Peninsula where his creed secured wide spread popularity and made the regions of Amida (Andhra), Damila (Dravida), Maharatta (Maharastra) and Kudukka (Coorg) safe for Jain monks[218] According to literary tradition, Salisuka, brother of Samprati Maurya, contributed to the spread of Jainism in Kathiawad[219]

Samprati sent his messengers to the borders of his empire

so that the Jain *Sramanas* could get all facilities in those countries These messengers described to the people the kind of food and other perquisites which monks may accept as alms enjoining them to give such things instead of the usual tax to the revenue collector, who would visit them from time to time Of course, these revenue collectors were Jain monks Having thus prepared the way for them, he induced the superiors to send monks to those countries, for they would find it in no way impossible to live there Accordingly missionaries were sent to these countries who found everything as the king had told We find names of at least twentyfive 'Aryadesh' where Jainism flourished during his time [220] Thus the uncivilized nations were brought under the influence of Jainism, but the preachers, however, never thought of going outside the borders of India [221]

**Dedication of Caves to the Ajivikas by Dasaratha :**

Dasaratha's sympathy with a sect antagonistic to Buddhism is inferred from the gifts which he presented to the Ajivikas and the silence of the Buddhistic texts on his reign as well [222] Like Asoka, Dasaratha dedicated three caves to the Ajivikas[223] in the year of his consecration at Nagarjun hills near the Barabar in Gaya district [224] The formula used in the dedication differs from that of Asoka 'The Vahiyika cave has been given by Dasaratha, dear to the Gods, to the venerable Ajivikas, immediately on his accession, to be a place of abode during the rainy season as long as moon and sun (shall endure) '[225] The two other caves called Gopika and Vadathika bear similar inscriptions.[226]

All these inscriptions dedicated by Dasaratha Devanampiya are inscrbed in Asokan Brahmi and the general tone of the inscriptions are similar to that of Asoka The wish that the abode may exist as long as the sun and the moon endure is reminiscent of the VIIth Pillar Edict, where Asoka wishes men and women

to confirm to the principles of *Dhamma* for as long as the sun and the moon endure

The Ajivikas term used for the Jainas in the inscriptions has already been mentioned above and it needs no explanation here again

**The Jain Torso of Patna :**

The earliest Jain remains so far discovered at Lohanipur in Pataliputra (modern Patna town) are in the tradition of Mauryan art of Kumhrar and Bulandibagh Unfortunately the discovery was not followed by planned excavation, with the result that we are left in the dark about the remains of one of the earliest Jain establishment

The site yielded two nude torsos of red stone,[227] the lower portion of a head, a mutilated arm or leg and the plinth of a brick structure (2 68 square), on the footing of which was found a worn-out silver punch marked coin [228] The fragmentary head and one of the two torsos, both of sand stone, bear the characteristic Maurya polish The polish is the same which we find at the Saranatha tomb and Lomash Rishi Cave [229] Though the large portion of the two arms of the polished torso is missing, the figure was apparently in *kayotsarga* (leaving the body) posture The figure, no doubt, represents a Tirthankara,[230] which makes a point clear that the images of Jainas were worshipped during that period [231] It has been suggested that the worship of image was borrowed from the Brahmanical Hindus first by the Jainas and later on by the Buddhists [232]

The statues are claimed to be belonging to the Mauryan period [233] The first statue having head and arm is said to have been of the period B C 320 [234] and the second statue in the *kayotasarga* posture, of dated 300 B C [235] The bricks of the plinth also have

been considered to be of the Mauryan period

With the end of the Mauryan dynasty in Bihar,[236] Jainism and Buddhism not only lost royal patronage, but had to face even the strong opposition of Brahmanism and its royal supporters In the forthcoming centuries, the seat of the Jain religious hierarchy gradually shifted to other parts of India

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3 *Mahavamsa* (Turnour), Appendix IV, p lxxvii
4 *Mahavamsa* Cf S Chattopadhayaya, *Bimbisara to Asoka* p 78
5 *Markandeya Purana* 88 5
6 R C Majumdar, *Classical Accounts of India* p 193
7 *Ibid* p 199
8 Hemchandra's *Parisisthaparvan* VIII, 230, (A village near modern Patna is still called 'More' which means peacock)
9 *Dighanikaya* II, 167
10 *Mahavamsa* (Turnour) Introduction, pp xxi xxxix-xii
11 *Mahavamsa* (Turnour), p XLII
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14 *Divyavadana avadana*, 29, pp 140-41 *Parisisthaparvan* says that Samprati, the son of Kunala, took the throne after the death of Asoka (IX 34-35)
15 Pargiter, *DKA* pp 27-28
16 *Matsya Purana* Chap 272, vv 23-24, *DKA* p 27
17 *DKA* p 28
18 Possibly he was the governor of that region before ascending the throne at Pataliputra
19 *Parisisthaparvan* X, XI
20 Raychaudhary, *Political History of Ancient India* (4th ed ) p 291
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23 *Tiloyapannati* IV p 1481 (The text which was written around A D 600 says that among the crowned kings, Chandragupta was the last one who accepted Jainism)
24 *Bhagavati Sutta* (Hyderabad ed ), p 427 K P Jain, *Sampsipta Jain Itihas*, Vol II pt I, p 122
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32 *EI,* Vol XXI, p 86, D C Sarkar *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization* Calcutta, 1942, pp 82,85
33 Mahasthan represents one of the earliest city sites of Bengal and this inscription found here is the first record of its kind ever found in Bengal (B C Law, *op cit,* p 234 )
34 Numbering about 12,000
35 *Avasyakacurni* pt II, p 187
36 P B Desai, *Jainism in South India* pp 1-15, K P Venkatarama Ayyar, 'South Indian Jainism', *Transactions of Archaeological Society of South India,* 1957-58, p 24
37 *Brhatakathakosa* (Ed A N Upadhyaya), pp 317-18
38 Probably a second name for Bindusara (R Thapar, *Asoka Aur Maurya Samrajya ka Patan* Hindi tr by D R Choudhary and Mrs R Y Yadava, Delhi, 1977 p 18)
39 Bhadrabahu died in B C 357 *(Chronology of Indian History* by Duff, p 7) But the Digambaras place his death in B C 365 (SBE xxii, Int XLIII and *Anekant,* Oct -Dec , 1980 p 120)
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41 *Parisisthaparvana* VIII 444 The Jain tradition is the only direct evidence which throws light on the manner in which the eventful reign of Chandragupta Maurya came to an end
42 Mookherjee *op cit* Vol II, pp 39-41, *Political History of Ancient India* (6th ed ), p 295 and note 2, Also, *Jinamanjari* Dec 1993, pp 65-66
43 Taranatha Qu by Mookherjee *CHI* p 39
44 Sravana Belgola and Gommateshvara' by A N Upadhya in the *Jain Antiquary* Vol XXV No 1 June, 1973 p 46
45 *Ibid*
46 Rice, Inscriptions at Sravana Balgola, *IA* 1889, Int p 7
47 *Ibid*
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49 Had not all the mentioned inscriptions been found we would have been left in darkness about the Bhadrabahu-Chandragupta tradition just like the famous emperor Kharavela, who is also known in Indian History so much due to the Inscriptions *(Sraman* Sept 1977 p 33)
50 *EI* Vol II, No I p 1, Vol IV, pp 22ff, *IA* Vol III, pp 153-58 Vol XXI, p 157
51 *IA* 1889, p 2, note 6
52 Inscriptions Nos 40 and 54, *IA* xxi 1892, p 152
53 *Ibid* p 152 Some South Indian recent excavations also confirm the historicity

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54 Pseudo-Origin, *Philosophia*, p 24
55 J Filliozat and L Renou, *Inde Classique* Paris, 1947, pp 2447-57
56 Mc Crindle, *Ancient India* p 102
57 *Majjhima Nikaya*, I, p 92
58 He was born and brought up in Pataliputra at a place near Gulzarbagh station in the old city area. An inscription in this regard has been found in the Kamaldah Jain temple at Gulzarbagh dated Vikaram Era 1848 (1792 A D) The epigraph records that the temple was constructed by the whole congregation living at Pataliputra and was dedicated to Sri Sthulabhadra (L A Waddell, *Report on the Excavations at Pataliputra*, p 57, Alteakar and Mishra, *Report on Kumharar Excavations*, 1951-55, p 10)
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60 Vol II, p 187
61 We have a definite date for him, viz Saka 598 (*Nandisutracurni* Prakrit Text Society, p 83)
62 J C Jain, *Prakrit Sahitya Ka Itihas* p 37, f n 1
63 Jinadasaganimahattara on *Avasyaka* Ratlam, 1928, pt II, p 187
64 It was not Bhadrabahu who made available ten Purvas to Sthulabhadra at this juncture, because he had already retired to South India and died along with Chandragupta Maurya earlier
65 The *Avasyakacurni* (pt II, p 187) says that with the death of Sthulabhadra, even the verbal embodiment of these four Purvas came to an end, as he was debarred from teaching them to others
66 'Jainism' by N C Shastri in the *Comprehensive History of Bihar* (ed B P Sinha) pt I Chap XXIV (C), p 853
67 It still continues and is popularly known as the *Sidahanatas*
68 Unfortunately, the sects do not quite agree as to what is meant by the eleven *Angas* and the fourteen *Purvas*, so that the work of the famous council of Pataliputra did not carry the weight which Sthulabhadra hoped it would have done (Stevenson, *Heart of Jainism* p 11)
69 C J Shah, *op cit* p 221
70 One of their grievances it seems may be their's non participation in the Council
71 *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Vol IX, No 1, p 24
72 Maharaja Deshbhushanji (ed) *Bhagwan Mahavira Swami Ki Vishwa Ko Dena*, pt II, p 11
73 He is known as Chanakya or Vishnugupta as well
74 *Anekant*, Vol II, p 104, *JSB*, Vol XV, No 1, pp 17-24, *J A*, Vol 38, No 2, Dec 1985, pp 31-34 and *Arhat Vachana* Jan 1992, p 18
75 *Avasyakacurni* p 583
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77 J P Jain, *Pramukha Aitihasika Jain Purusa aur Mahilayen* pp 34-35
78 *Mahavamsa* (Ed Moggalan), gatha 68-69

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81 *Ibid*, v 411
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92 *Kautilya* XXII 5 (tr by R Shamsastry p 449)
93 *The Heart of Jainism* p 11
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95 *Parisisthaparvan* and *Rajavalikatha* also H L Jain *Jain Silalekha Sangraha* pt I Intro pp 61ff
96 Thapar *Asoka and the Decline of the Maurya Fmpire* (Indian Edition), 1977 p 26
97 Thapar, *op cit* p 139
98 *JSB* Vol I pt I p 12
99 *DKA* p 25, R K Mookherjee *Asoka* p 3 f n 5
100 *Divyavadana* (Ld Cowell and Neil Cambridge 1886) Vol XXVI pp 371 ft
101 *JSB* Vol II, pt 1 pp 62-74
102 *JRAS* Vol XII 1908, pp 238 250
103 *Asoka* p 48
104 *JRAS*, Vol XII, 1908, pp 491-492
105 *Early History of Bengal* p 214
106 *Quarterly Journal of the Mystic Society*, Vol xvii, pp 255 ff
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108 *IA* Vol XX pp 260, 264-65
109 Buhler, *The Indian sects of the Jainas* pp 30-31
110 He uses the word *Sramana* while referring to the Jainas (Bhandarkar *Asoka* pp 168 ff)
111 S B Deo *Jain Monachism*, p 90
112 Thomas goes as far as to declare Asoka to be true Jain (*Jainism or early faith of Asoka* London, 1877 II, p 30 ff)
113 C J Shah *op cit* p 142, E Thomas, *JRAS* New series Vol IX, pp 155 and 187
114 *Mahavamsa* XII, 6-9, *Dipavamsa* VI 15-16
115 Modern Besanagar near Bhilsa
116 *Vamsathappakasini*, I p 324
117 *Dipavamsa*, VI, 15-16

118 'When the succession developed on Asoka the son of Janaka's paternal uncle, he abolished the Brahmanical religion and established the Jain faith' - Jarrett *Ain-I-Akbari* II,p 382, Wilson *AR* Vol XV, p 10, *JRAS*, Vol IX, p 183
119 Jainism was introduced there by Suhasthin, the great ecclesiastical head of the order at that time
120 According to Kalhan, Asoka adopted the religion of Jina *(Rajatarangini*, tr by M A Stein, Westminster, 1900 pt I, p 102)
121 J Przyluski, *La Legenda del Empereur Acoka*, Paris, 1923, pp 278-79
122 'The Rummandei Inscription and the conversion of Asoka to Buddhism', *JRAS*, 1908 p 491-92
123 *Ibid* pp 491-97
124 Only in the Bhabru Inscription he mentions the Buddhism and his own faith in it (Y Mishra, *Asoka* p 96)
125 F W Thomas, *Cambridge History of India* Vol I, p 505
126 *JRAS* 1908, London, pp 491-97
127 *Manavadharmasastra* 1 114
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129 In *Kalpasutra* (tr by Stenenson, Varanasi, 1972) Rsabhadatta is addressed by Devanandi, mother of Mahavira, (pp 26-30) and he, in return, salutes her as 'O beloved of the Gods (pp 27, 29 etc) At page 54, king Siddhartha, in explaining Trisala's dream commences 'o-beloved of the Gods' At pp 56,61, speaking to the royal messengers he addressed them as, 'o-beloved of the Gods' and at p 64 The 'Interpreters of dreams are received with the same complimentary greeting
130 Cf Hemchandra *Abhidhanacintamani* III 17
131 Kielhorn *JRAS* 1908, p 505
132 K C Shastri *Jain Dharma* (in Hindi) p 34
133 Delhi Topra Vth Pillar Fdict
134 *Ibid*
135 The days on which slaughters were mainly prohibited were *Ashtam*, *Chaturdasi*, *Kartika Phalgun* and *Asadha-Astanhika* & Falgun festivals These days were more sacred for the Jainas than for the others *Asthami* and *Chaturdasi* are festival days for the Jainas and not for Vedic or Buddhist followers *(JSB* Vol XVI, pt II, p 123)
136 He (the king) should prohibit the slaughter of animals for half a month during the period of *Chaturmasya* (from July to September) and four nights during the full moon *(Arthasastra*, XIII, V, tr by R Shamsastry, p 449)
137 *Digha Nikaya*, I, 6, the Prakrit form of the Samaja is 'Samaya' *(JRAS*, 1914, pp 392-94)
138 Being primarily an edict of *ahimsa* and morality
139 In regard to the positive side of *Dhamma* he specifies not only the attributes that constitute it, but also the ethical practices in which they are to manifest themselves As regards its negative character, he has taken care to enumerate the malavolent affections which impel a man to sin and depravity *(asinava)* and to exhort us to keep ourselves as free from them as possible
140 In Pillar Edict III, *asinava* has been mentioned side by side with *papa* (sin) and in Rock Edict X we meet with the word *palaisava* in sense of *apunya* (demerit)

141 D C Sircar, *Selected Inscriptions*, No XXVI, p 58
142 Sometimes, they add to this list a fourth one, namely *ditth-asava* (heresy)
143 D R Bhandarkar, *Asoka* pp 126-127, Mookherjee, *Asoka*, p 71
144 *EI*, Vol II, p 250
145 *Ibid*
146 *Acharanga Sutta* (Pali Text Society) p 92
147 *SBE* Vol XXII p 151
148 No mina papam (d) ekhati iyam me papa kete ti iyam va asinava namati (Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, No XXVI, p 58)
149 Yesa tu parisava ya apvnajjnam (apunyam) (D C Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, No XXV, p 31)
150 S Stevenson, *Heart of Jainism* pp 116 ff and 139 ff
151 Pillar Edict, No 3
152 D R Bhandarkar, *Asoka* (IVth ed Calcutta, 1969), p 188
153 Asoka did not use them together but he had mentioned all the four in his edicts
154 Jacobi, *SBE*, Vol XXII, p 36 and fn 1
155 Anarambhpranananam and avihisa bhutanam
156 Y Mishra, *Asoka* (in Hindi) p 43
157 Rock Edits VII and XII (Kalsi Girnar & Mansera versions)
158 D C Sircar *Select Inscription* No XXX, pp 65 ff, *Jain Silalekha Sangraha* Vol II No 1
159 Delhi-Topra Pillar Edict VII (Delhi edict) In Rock Edicts V and XII the descriptions of Dharma-maha-mattaras have also been given
160 *Pillar Edict* VII, Shahbajgarhi Version
161 Jain Silalekha II, No 1 Hultzsch, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* Vol I p 136 D C Sircar *Select Inscriptions* No 30 p 66
162 This hill is 31 kilometres north of Gaya and 36 kilometres by road During the time of Asoka it was called Khalatik (ball headed) and later on as Gorathagiri It was named as Pravargiri and Barabar is its distortion
163 Gaya Distt Gazetter (ed P C Roychoudhary), 1957 55
164 *Ibid*
165 Y Mishra *op cit* p 24
166 *Gaya District Gazetter* p 55
167 *IA* Vol XX, p 364
168 *Ibid*
169 D C Sircar, *Select Inscriptions* pp 78-79 *CII* Vol I pp 181 ff, *IA* XX, pp 168 ff
170 *ERE* pt I, p 226
171 *Cambridge History of India* (3rd ed), p 166
172 *EC* Vol X, *EI* Vol XXVIII, p 7
173 *Jainism in Northern India*, p 67
174 A K Chatterjee (*Comprehensive History of Jainism*, p 29) is of the view that this religion (Ajivika) did not continue to flourish for a long time after the death of Gosala, which took place in Sravasti, 16 years before the demise of Mahavira
175 *ERE*, pt I, p 266
176 *IA* Vol XX p 361, *EI* Vol II pp 274 ff and *JRAS* 1911, p 960

177 *Uvasagadasao*, App I, p 4
178 *Bhagvati Sutra*, XV, *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* (Ed G P Malalasekhere), Colombo, 1962, p 330
179 *IA*, Vol XVII, p 280, Vol XX, pp 170-71
180 *Dhammapadatthakatha* (Ed H C Norman), 1906, pt I, p 309
181 *Ibid* p 390
182 Ed P L Vaidya, *Darbhanga*, p 427
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197 *Jainism in Northen India*, p 67
198 *Ibid*
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200 Takakusu *Records of the Buddhist Religion* p 73 Cf *JRAS* London, 1908, p 486
201 *JRAS* 1913 London p 637
202 King Priyadarsin Beloved of the Gods, wishes that all sects may live at all places, because they all desire self-restraint and purification of heart' (Rock Edict VII, Shahbalgarhi Version, Cf, Y Mishra, *Asoka* p 104)
203 Minor Rock Edict (1st MRE, Saranatha), Cf Y Mishra, *Asoka*, p 132
204 *Asoka* p 69
205 *Parisisthaparvan* II, IX, 54
206 C J Shah *op cit*, p 144
207 *Parisisthaparvan* II, 23 66
208 He was contemporary of Aryasuhasthi and Aryamahagiri according to the Sveambara Jain tradition the *Vividhatirthakalpa Pataliputra nagar Kalpa* (p 69), say that he took Jain *Diksha* from Arya Suhasthin
209 Suhasthin resided in Ujjain only temporarily
210 *Vrihatkalpabhasya* Vol III, 917-21 gathas, 3285-89 ff
211 *Kalpasutra* Subodhitika, v 6, p 163
212 V A Smith, *Early History of India* p 202
213 *Devanamapriya* was a word from Jain traditon
214 Jain *Bharat Ke Prachin Digambara Jain Tirtha*, pt. I, p 9
215 *Ibid* p 168

216 *Jinamanjari* Vol V No 2 (Oct 1992), pp 36-41
217 Hemchandra's *Parisisthaparvan* (ed Jacobi), p 60
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221 Presidential address by Dr N Dutt in the *Indian History Congress*, 11th Session Delhi 1948, p 43
222 N Dutt, *Early Monastic Buddhism* Calcutta, 1941 Vol II, p 255
223 This is possibly the last mention of the Ajivikas in the North Indian epigraphs
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225 D C Sircar, *op cit* Vol I pp 79 ff *IA* Vol XX pp 364 ff
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227 Now preserved in Patna Museum Cf S E Lee *Ancient Sculptures from India* Cleveland 1964 fig 14 'Patna Museum ki Jain Pratimayen *Jain Siddhanta Bhaskar* Vol 13 No 2 1947 pp 95-96
228 *JBORS* XXIII pt I 1937 pp 130-132 Vol XXVI, 1940 pp 120-124
229 V Upadhyaya *Prachin Bharatiya Murti Vigyan* p 214 Beginning of Jain Iconography by U P Shah in *Jainthology* Calcutta 1991 pp 109 and 11
230 Debala Mitra 'Monuments and Sculpture (300 B C -A D 300) in East India in *Jaina Art and Architecture* (ed A Ghosh) pt I p 71
231 B P Sinha *op cit* p 65
232 U P Shah *op cit* pp 39-40
233 *Patna Museum Report for 1928-29* pp 3-4, *JBORS* Vol XXIII pp 130-32 B C Bhattacharya *Jain Iconography* Delhi 1974 p xiv
234 Patna Museum Ki Jain Murtiyan *JSB* Vol 13 No 2 1947, pp 95-96
235 *Ibid*
236 With Brhadratha, the Mauryan rule came to an end in C 187 B C

# JAINISM BEFORE THE RISE OF THE GUPTAS (C. 188 B.C. - A.D. 319)

**A short Political History of the Period :**

The weak rule and dissentions among the later Mauryas added to the disintegration of the empire The last Maurya ruler, Brhadratha, was a weak and worthless king His *Senapati*, Pushyamitra Sunga, killed him in the face of his whole army while he was reviewing the parade [1] This event occured in the year 187 B C If the Puranic evidence is correct, the Maurya dynasty ruled for a period of 137 years and placing Chandragupta Maurya's accession in 324 B C, we naturally arrive at this date for Pushyamitra's accession [2] B N Puri[3] places it in about 185 B C According to P C Bagchi[4] Pushyamitra's reign must have started earlier than what is believed and ended shortly before 175 B C Bagchi does not suggest any particular date for the accession of Pushyamitra Jagannatha[5] places the murder of Brhadratha in 184 B C R K Mookherjee[6] and Raychaudhary[7] adhere to the date 187 B C Placing Chandragupta Maurya's accession in 324 B C, we find no ground for questioning the date 187 B C, when Brhadratha was assassinated

From the available sources of the period, it is known that the power of the Sungas came to an end in 75 B C with the end of Devabhuti or Devabhumi, the last Sunga king [8] According to the

Puranas, the Sungas reigned for 112 years[9] and if its account is to be relied upon, their rule came to an end in 75 B C [10]

The Sungas were overthrown by the Kanvas and they got the power under Vasudeva, who was an *amatya* of Devabhumi and this is why the Kanvas are called 'Sungabhrtyas' The total period of the Kanva rule is 45 years The Andhras, who appear to be subordinate to the Kanvas, murdered the last Kanva king and also destroyed the remaining Sunga power [11] This event should have happened in circa 30 B C But there is no evidence before us to suppose that they raided the northern portion of Bihar or not [12] The history of this part of Bihar, after the fall of the Kanva dynasty, is shrouded in considerable obscurity Neither literary nor archaeological evidence throws sufficient light on the political conditions that may have prevailed in this region after the Kanva rule came to an end in the last quarter of the first century B C The Puranas[13] speak of the Andhras or the Satvahanas of the Deccan as the political successors of the Kanvas, which shows that the centre of gravity of power had apparently shifted from Magadha to Deccan, where the Satvahanas had emerged as the empire builders Probably, a Satvahana king penetrated upto Pataliputra and occupied the Magadhan capital, but the duration of his occupation of Magadha must have been short lived Nothing is known of the political events of the reign till the middle of the first century A D , when the Kushanas occupied this region, except that the Lichchavis of North Bihar occupied the Magadha On the basis of the Nepal Inscription of Jayadeva II of 758 A D,[14] K P Jayaswal has come to the conclusion that the Lichchavis probably brought the Mitra rulers of Magadha under their subordination [15]

The rise of the Kushanas in Indian History constitutes a landmark in the annals of our cultural progress Dr A S Altekar has opined that Weme Kadphises extended the Kushana rule upto

Bihar [16] But this is a far fetched conclusion The most celebrated and renowned as a great conqueror among the Kushan kings was Kaniska I, the successor of Weme Kadphises, and he seems to have ruled upto Pataliputra in the east

There are sufficient evidences, mostly numismatic, to establish that the area of Bihar, was under the rule of the Kushanas during the second half of the first century A D There is no doubt about the extent of the Kushana rule upto Varanasi, which was the headquarter of the Kushana Governor in charge of the eastern province [17] A large number of copper Kushana coins found all over this region suggest that the whole of the present Bihar was included in the Kushana empire There are different opinions about the duration of the Kushana rule in this region, but there seems to be no doubt about the continuation of the Kushana rule from the reign of Kaniska (78 A D ) to Huviska (138 A D ) It is not unlikely that even after the death of Huviska, Kushana suzerainty, in a feeble form, may have continued there for sometime We may assign a period of at least 60 years (C 80 A D to 140 A D ) for the Kushana domination of the area under review

The history of Bihar after the withdrawal of the Kushana suzerainty is again much confused and obscure The Murundas, the Nagas and the Kotas, are said to have ruled this area But due to the lack of reliable evidences, it is really a difficult task to establish the chronological sequence of these dynasties From the combined testimony of the Jainas,[18] the Chinese writers[19] and Ptolemy,[20] it appears that a considerable portion of ancient India was under the rule of the Murundas in the second half and third centuries A D [21] They were in possession of an extensive territory of North-Eastern India extending from Gorakhpur to Bengal with their capital at Pataliputra [22] They were possibly the viceroys under the Kushanas

and they took the earliest opportunity in carving out an independent kingdom after the decline of the Kushanas But for what duration the Murundas continued to rule on this part is a matter of uncertainty

According to Jayaswal[23] during the 2nd-3rd centuries A D , the Nagas established an empire extending from Mathura to Bhagalpur and a dynasty called Kota flourished in Magadha under them The existence of a Naga empire, as envisaged by Jayaswal, is now no longer tenable but the possibility of a Naga family ruling with its capital at Champa is not unlikely [24] From the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, it appears that Pataliputra was under the rule of the Kotas till A D 350

**Position of Jain Religion During this Period :**
**Sunga Period ·**

Soon after the closure of the Mauryan Chapter in Bihar, Jainism and Buddhism not only lost political patronage and affimity, but had also to face strong opposition from Brahmanism and its supporter kings But the newly created environment did not succeed in vanishing Jainism from this portion of the country, rather it is found that it was not inactive in this period

Generally a very common charge has been levelled against the Sunga king Pushyamitra that he was a staunch Brahman and caused the death of Buddhist and Jain monks This assumption is based on the version of the Buddhist text *Divyavadana*[25] which says that he put the price of one hundred *dinars* for the head of a monk This account of Pushyamitra's vendetta against the monks seems to be exaggerated because a similar vengeance against the Ajivikas and Nirgranthas is attributed to Asoka in the same text where it is stated that he put the price of one *dinar* for the head of a *nirgrantha* [26] He is said to be responsible for destroying monasteries and monks from Magadha to Jullandhar area in the modern Punjab

and thus there was no way for the Jains but to leave Bihar and adjoining areas and shift to other parts of the country

But the above mentioned charges do not seem to be correct either for Jain or Buddhist monks and monasteries In fact, they did not interfere with the Sramana religions-Buddhism and Jainism Mookherjee rightly remarked[27] that neither Buddhism nor Jainism had eclipsed, for some magnificent Buddhist and Jain monuments were erected in the kingdom of the Sungas Therefore it can be concluded that *Divyavadana,* no doubt, gives a short sighted view The Buddhist monuments of Bharhut[28] and Sanchi[29] erected during the sovereignty of the Sungas do not bear out the theory that the Sungas were the leaders of a militant Brahmanism Besides, the later Buddhist literatures do not accuse the Sungas in general for the anti-Buddhist policy The Buddhist activities of Pushyamitra are not said to have been influenced by his religious fanaticism [30] The story of general persecution is evidently the invention of frustrated minds which found that the state patronage was being shifted to the Brahmanas It was because of partly personal and partly political reasons In Pushyamitra's wars with the Bactrian Greeks, the Buddhist might have been soft to the Greeks,[31] whose leaders, Menander, was definitely under Buddhist influence This might have agitated Pushyamitra to go against the Buddhist for some time But on this particular instance, It can't be assumed that he was altogether against the Buddhist and Jains The popularity of the Jain religion no doubt lessened within the state, but the circumstances did not prove that the existence of Jainism was shaken due to Pushyamitra's attitude towards the *Sraman* religion

That the Jainas were holding good position in Bihar and adjoining areas is shown also from the two inscriptions[32] of the 2nd century B C recovered from Pabhosa near Kausambi, which are of much historical importance On the basis of these inscriptions,

we can say that the Jain monks enjoyed royal patronage during the Sunga period in the eastern parts of India [33] The earliest Jain inscription of Mathura of B C 150 shows that the Jain philosophy was introduced to Mathura via Kosala, As regards the Jain art, Mathura again holds a very important place There were two Jain *stupas* of which one was built in the Sunga period

From the Hathigumpha inscription, it is learnt that when Brhaspatimitra was king of Magadha, king Kharavela of Kalinga attacked Pataliputra, stormed Goradhagiri (Barabar hills), brought pressure to bear upon Rajgriha and carried away much booty along with certain Jain images which had been originally brought to Pataliputra by a Nanda king from Kalinga This incident happened during the first century B C

Now the question arises as to what could have been the reason behind an invasion against a place which was not an important political centre during this period Kharavela was a powerful king and has been regarded as a staunch Jain He had not forgotten the past history of Kalinga when it was attacked by Nanda king and a Jain statue was brought from there to Magadha So he attacked Rajgriha with a revenging tendency and did actually what the Nandas had done in Kalinga One thing is clear from the nature of the attack and capturing of the Jain idol after a war that Jainism was still very much popular during this time in Bihar, otherwise the Kalinga king would have only asked for the Jain statue from Sunga king instead of capturing it after great resistance by the local people and king

With the exception of the Mathura region and Orissa, very few pre-Christian inscriptions, connected with Jain religion and faith, have been discovered which could give informations to us about Jainism in Bihar region [34] But it was being popularised outside

Bihar during this period is clear from the inscriptions and literary evidences as well

**POST SUNGA PERIOD :**

During this period, the king had normally no affinity and enthusiasm for Jain religion On the other hand they manifestly show their bias for Hinduism and Buddhism But a good number of the Kshatriyas showed their regard for the Jain religion which was basically based on non-violence Altogether five percent of the common people were admirers of this religion [35] Even people of questionable professions contributed liberally for the welfare of the religion of Parsva and Mahavira The canonical and non-canonical texts also abundantly show the weakness of the traders for this religion [36]

The continuity of Jainism at Pataliputra in the 1st-2nd century A D is proved by the presence of Jain thinkers and philosophers at this place

The Prakrit *Pattavli* mentions of Puspadanta and Bhutabali who composed *Satakhandagama* in the first century A D Though Bihar has no connection with the authors of the *Satakhandagama,* the *pattavalis* prove that before going to the Tamil land, Bhutabali and Puspadanta had also paid a visit to Sammeda Sikhara So, it can be conveniently assumed that these teachers gathered their inspiration for their works in Bihar [37]

Umasvati,[38] the pupil of Ghosanandi and Mula, actively worked in Pataliputra and of his works, the most important are the *Tattvarthadhiganasutrani*[39] of which he himself composed a commentary These were composed in the beginning of the Christian era [40] The *Sutras* were recognised as authoritative by the Svetambaras as well as the Digambaras, while the commentary, however, only by the Svetambaras

Jainism in this period appears to have attracted the Murundas of Pataliputra [41] The Jain tradition *Brhatkalpavrtti* refers to a Murunda king of Pataliputra, who was a pious Jain and whose widowed sister had also embraced the same faith [42] The *Padalipta Prabandha* of the *Prabhanakaracaritra* relates the story as to how Padalipta cured king Murunda of Pataliputra of his terrible headache [43]

**Archaeological Evidences :**

But the most important sources for making an assessment of Jainism are inscriptions and statues of various Jinas of this period (B C 188 to A D 319) which are scattered all over Northern India On the basis of their findings, we get an idea of its wide prevalence and popularity A large number of dedicatory inscriptions of the periods of Kaniska, Huviska, Vasudeo and others have come to light which belong latest to the end of the first and second centuries A D They all are on the pedestals of statues which are recognisable partly by the special mention of the names of Vardhaman and the Arhat Mahavira and partly by absolute nudity and other marks They show that the Jain community continued to flourish in the Kushana period, besides giving extraordinarily important informations

The Tirthankara image of the Kushana age may be divided into three categories, viz (i) in which the Jina figures form a part of a sculptural panel (ii) in which the figures are represented as images for worship and (iii) figures in the middle of the *ayagapatas* [44] Idolatry became one of the chief institutions of orthodox Jainism and the process was precisely parallel to what happened with Buddhism [45] By this time, the Yaksa and Yaksis (who were called *sasana devatas and devis)* gained importance[46] along with the Tirthankaras and their images also started being installed around the images of Jain Tirthankaras

The Jain images and *chaumukhs* (quadruples) of this period bear, in some cases, characteristically enough, figures of devoted worshipper on the pedestal flanking a *dharma cakra* mostly in profile During this period, the individual identity of the image was not marked with any special emblem or *lanchan* which only developed much later except in the case of 1st and 23rd Tirthankaras [47] *Triratnas*[48] also find a prominant place all around the Jain figure It was also in this period that we meet for the first time the panels with stories from the life of the Tirthankaras

The earliest inscription of Kushana period is found at Mathura which is of A D 82 and falls within the reign of Kaniska.[49] Inscriptions of Kaniska and Huviska are found in the eastern adjoining parts of India at Mathura[50] and Pabhosa[51] which show that Jain monks lived at those places from the pre-Christian era and enjoyed royal patronage The Jain canon was also collected and edited here under the presidentship of Skandila in the first of the 4th century A D [52]

This region of Bihar has bequeathed to us images in stone and metal and a few terracotta figurines of the period The stone images come mainly from Rajgriha while Chausa (District Bhojpur) has supplied sixteen metal images, six of them belong to this period

**Rajgriha :**

One of the early Jain caves of this period is the Sona Bhandar cave in Rajgriha It bears a Brahmi inscription of first century A D according to which Muni Vairadeva,[53] a jewel among teachers and great lustre, caused to be excavated two caves for the use of Jain ascetics with images of Jinas (Arhats) installed in them [54] One Jain *stambha* having Jain statue is still preserved there The second cave about which mention has been made in the inscription as well, is undoubtedly the next side cave, which has been converted as the 'Vaisnava Cave' In the Digambara tradition, the name of Varajesh

has come and he is regarded as the last of the *Prajasramans* In Svetambara tradition also, Ajjavaira is mentioned and is called *Padanusari* The *Prajyasramanatvya* and *Padanusaritvya* are sub-kinds of *Buddhiriddhi* and have been given equal importance in the *Vedanakhanda* of the *Katha Khandagama* Thus, both of them indicate to one *Acharya* only According to the *Kalpasutra Sthaviravali*, the period of Ayyavaira or Aryavera is between 496 to 584 of the Vira Nirvana Samvat, which comes to the period in the Christian era The caves of Sonabhandar were most probably excavated during his life time [55]

**Chausa :**

From Chausa[56] some Jain bronze images belonging to this period have been discovered which also show the popularity of this religion in the South Bihar region These are seven in number[57] and are nude figures of the Jain Tirthankaras [58] They are all represented standing and are in the *kayotsarga* posture Though the figures are small in size, they exhibit the basic characteristics of the Kushana art Compared to some of the Mathura sculptures, these are very much similar in thier style and execution Another point of similarity with the Mathura stone image is the treatment of the Mathura hair style In the Mathura Buddha images, the hair has been shown in curls Exactly such curls can be seen in some of the Chausa bronze statues of the Kushana period [59] Special symbols (lanchanas) of the various Tirthankaras are absent It can, therefore, be inferred that such *lanchanas* were not evolved during the period under review, rather they were developed later on

**Nandangarh :**

Some statues have been recovered from Nandangarh in the present West Champaran district of Bihar during the year 1936-37 [60] Subjectively, they can be ascribed to 2nd century or 1st century B C Among the statues, most of the women figures wear in the

ear *patra kundalas* There are some crude figures, showing a mother and a baby Though it is very difficult to determine their sectarian identity, but they may be Hindu or Jain *Agnila*, or Buddhist *Harita*, goddess of children [61]

**Bhagalpur :**

There is a very old Jain Digambara temple and a *Dharmasala* at the Nathanagar road in Bhagalpur district [62] To the east and south of this temple, there are two *manastambha,* about fifty feet high These are supposed to be about 2200 years old[63] and presuamably of the Sunga-Kushana period It was partly destroyed in the earth quake of 1934, but was repaired in 1938

**Other Jain Antiquities :**

Some Jain images have also been recovered from the parts of eastern U P , which throw encouraging light on the co-existence and spread of Jainism during our period in the eastern parts of India. These images have been found at Varanasi,[64] Kausambi,[65] Pabhosa[66] and other adjoining places [67] These finds are the burning proof to show that this faith was in keen competition with other creeds of the day not only within the boundaries of the present Bihar state, but at the very outskirts of the state as well

**The Division of the Jain Church :**
**Svetambara and Digambara**

The separation of the Nirgrantha community into two of its most important factions of the Svetambaras[68] and the Digambaras[69] is a great turning point in the history of the Jain church It is not known definitely as to when the first division of this type took place But it is certain that during the life time of Mahavira, there did not exist such types of differences [70] None of the schools attempts to give an idea of the origin of their own sect and whatever they have to say regarding the origin of the other schools is of no

significance Attempts to explain the origin of the split are mainly based upon only one divergent practice, that of wearing a white robe or going naked, which had given to the two sects their different names

**Digambara Tradition :**

The Digambaras believe that in the beginning, Jain monks did not wear any clothes, but in the reign of Chandragupta Maurya, Bhadrabahu predicted a terrible famine in Magadha for twelve years Therefore, a part of the Jain community migrated from Magadha to Southern India under his leadership and the rest remained there Sometime afterwards, when the Jain leaders and its followers met at Ujjain, the famine was still raging and, hence, they allowed the monks to wear a piece of cloth (Ardhaphalaka) to avoid nudity while going on for begging But after the end of the famine, they continued this practice as well The conservative elements protested against it and thus these *ardhaphalakas* became the forerunner of the Svetambaras [71] They seem to be parting company almost immediately after Bhadrabahu, as Samantabhadra is the nineteenth teacher in the Svetambara and twentyfourth in the Digambara list [72] Hoernle observes that before Bhadrabahu, the Jain community was undivided, with him the Digambaras separated from the Svetambaras [73]

But the final separation, however, was made strong as a result of the incidents which happened with Chandralekha, queen of king Lokapala of Vilabhipura A story goes on that these *Ardhaphalaka* monks were invited by her, but finding them neither clothed nor naked, the king was displeased, and the queen, therefore, asked them to wear full clothes From that time, the *Ardhaphalakas* began to put on white clothes and came to be called *Svetapatas* or Svetambaras [74]

**This tradition is supported by the following facts :**

(i) There are numerous references to the famine of Magadha given in many texts And the incident that Bhadrabahu had gone to Southern India is described in an inscription of Sravanabelgola of A D 600 [75]

(ii) In the *Sthananga,*[76] Mahavira says to Gautam, 'I have propounded the religion having faith in nudity '[77]

(iii) In the sculptures of Udaigiri and in the Khandagiri caves, Tirthankaras are shown naked [78]

**The Svetambara Tradition :**

According to the Svetambaras, the Jain order was divided into two sects by Sivabhuti,[79] a resident of Rathavirapura and a disciple of the Svetambara preceptor Kanha This incident happened 609 years after the death of Mahavira They relate that Sivabhuti was an employee of the king of Rathavirapura[80] and won many battles for the king As the king showed honour to him, he became very proud He used to return home very late at night, so his mother, on the complaint of her daugher-in-law, refused to open the door and asked him to go and find other place Sivabhuti left his home and went to a Jain *upasraya* (monastery) He asked the *acarya* to initiate him but the *acarya* refused to do so Lastly, Sivabhuti himself plucked his hairs and wandered as a monk with others After some time, Sivabhuti came to his native place The king, his former friend, after coming to know of his arrival sent him a valuable shawl *(ratnakambala)* as a gift But Sivabhuti's senior Krsnarsi protested and did not allow to use that *ratnakambala* When Sivabhuti did not listen to his advice, he tore up the *shawl* and used it as a mattress The infuriated Sivabhuti did not say anthing to his senior Later on, he expressed his disappointment by creating a schism in the community Sivabhuti left taking advices from his senior and ultimately, giving up all clothing, he went about naked His sister

Uttara[81] also followed him and she also became nude But when the courtesans of that city complained that nobody would be inclined to go to them, being repulsed by seeing the ugly nature of the faminine body, Sivabhuti did not let his sister adopt nudity Two other persons, Kaundinya and Kottavira, became Sivabhuti's disciples In this way, Sivabhuti created a schism in which monks could live nude and nuns clothed[82]

This would show that the Digambaras appeared later in the Jain community, about six hundred years after Mahavira's *nirvana* In support of the view that at first the Digambara monks used to wear clothes but later on, they opposed this practice, the following facts have been mentioned

(i) The Bhadrabahu episode is not consistent with the Jain tradition There were more Bhadrabahus than one Which of them is intended in the Digambara account is doubtful

(ii) In the old texts, where a reference is made to nudity, the idea is to emphasize non-attachment to wordly things At these places, therefore, nudity is mentioned in a symbolic sense and not in its literal meaning[83]

Both these traditions are late The earliest available texts which mention of the Digambara tradition occurs in the *Brhatkathakosa*[84] of Harisena of 10th century A D The earliest literary reference to the Svetambara tradition is in the *Avasyaka Niryukti* of about A D 500[85] Both partake of elements of legend which sectarian rigidity tended to foster From the historical point of view, they have to be taken with a grain of salt

The early canonical literature shows that during the early days, there was no hard and fast distinction between the precepts and practices of these two Jain sects nor any clear demarcation between

them along sectarian lines Parsva allowed an under and an upper garments, while Mahavira forbade clothing altogether This information we get in such an early text as the *Uttararadhyayana*,[86] which was not improbably composed in the 4th century B C It seems that from early times the Jain monks, according to their individual whims, indulged in both kinds of practices, viz *Jinakalpa* or *Sthavirakalpa* respectively Mahavira himself discarded clothing altogether thirteen months after he became an ascetic, while Parsva never went naked The *Brhatkalpabhasya*[87] further informs us that the doctrine of the first and the last Tirthankara was based on nudity, while that of intervening twenty two Tirthankaras allowed both nudity and wearing garments Though Mahavira's followers went about naked, he never personally insisted on the strict observance of nudity The *Avasyakacurni*[88] refers to one Munichandra, who practised *Jinakalpa* and was considered a rebel by Mahavira While the *Sthananga*[89] permits the use of garments under certain conditions, the *Acaranga*[90] provides garments for begging

The evidence of some Mathura sculptures suggest that even the Svetambara sometimes represented their Tirthankara as nude and the naked images of the Jain Tirthankaras were worshipped by both the sects So, we need not be unduly perturbed if we come across nude Jina figures of pre-Christian days, as this proves that there was no difference between the two sects even in the beginning of the First Century A D As a matter of fact, one of the early celebrated Jain teachers, Mahagini, according to the *Avasvakacurni* was an exponent of *Jinakalpa* (the doctrine of nudity) Suhasthin, another great Svetambara monk, practised *Sthavirakalpa*. It[91] further informs that *Jinakalpa* continued upto Aryaraksita It also appears that the Digambaras, who insisted on absolute nudity continued the tradition of *Jinakalpa* monks and a rebel group under Sivabhuti finally raised the staff of rebellion and formed a new sect in the

middle of the second century A D The evidence of the literary writings of the Svetambara and early sculptures go to show that most of the differences between the two sects were of slow growth and did not arise all at one time, and one may agree with J C Jain that 'the division of the Jainas in Svetambara and Digambara was a gradual process'[92] and hence it is almost impossible to fix an exact date for this great schism in the Jain community[93] For obvious climatic reasons, the Svetambaras survive in the colder climate of Northern India, while the Digambaras thrive in the warmer climate of the South[94]

**Important points of differences between the Svetambaras and the Digambaras :**

(i) The Digambaras preach that the Jain ascetics should not put on clothes, while the Svetambaras are of the opinion that they should use white clothes

(ii) The Svetambaras, unlike the Digambaras, hold that the Tirthankaras should not be represented nude

(iii) The Digambaras hold that none who is born an eunuch can ever attain the stage of *moksa* or liberation nor can a woman ever attain final emancipation without becoming a man by taking another birth The Svetambaras, on the other hand, keep the view that the women possess perfect knowledge and they also, like men, do get salvation directly[95]

(iv) The Svetambaras hold that Mahavira got married and had children, while the Digambaras are of opinion that he never married at all

(v) The Digambaras refused to acknowledge the canons complied in the first Jain council held at Pataliputra under Sthulabhadra and held that in their eyes, the *Puvvas* (Purvas) and

*Angas* were no more extant

(vi) There is a difference in the list of the canonical works of the two

(vii) The Svetambaras do not allow their religious texts to be read by laymen or even by nuns, but restrict their use for monks alone

(viii) According to the Svetambaras, Malli, the 19th Tirthankara, was a woman, while the Digambaras believed that as it was not possible for a woman to become a Tirthankara, Malli was a male

(ix) The Svetambaras held that even a *kevalin* required food, but to the Digambaras, one who has attained the stage of perfect knowledge needs no food to sustain his life

(x) The biographies of sixtythree great men of the Jainas are called *Purvas* by the Digambaras, while they are called *Charitras* by the Svetambaras

(xi) The Digambar *sadhu* class leads the life of an ordinary ascetic living in seclusion, while the Svetambara *sadhu* moves from place to place

(xii) According to the Svetambaras, Puspadanta, the 9th Tirthankara, had crocodile as his symbol, while the Digambaras thought that it was the crab

(xiii) According to the Svetambara texts, king Vikramaditya was converted into Jainism by Divakara in 57 B C , while the other sect held that he was converted between 187 and 271 A D

(xiv) The Digambaras and a section of the Svetambaras hold that the two aspects of knowledge, *jnana* and *darsana* are found, simultaneously in a *kevalin* But there is a great majority of the Svetambaras who believe that even in a *kevalin,* they occur in

succession

(xv) The Digambaras and Svetambaras have minor differences in connection with the *Vidyadevis* and *Sasanadevis*

(xvi) The Digambaras represent Vairoti, the *sasanadevi* of Vimalanatha, the 13th Tirthankara, as *Haridvarna*, mounted on a snake and holding snakes in her four hands In a Svetambara literature, however, Vimalanatha's female attendant, described as being of the same colour, seated on a lotus, and holding a single snake, bow, arrow and noose in her hands, is referred to as Vidita or Vijaya

(xvii) According to the Digambaras, the *Sasanadevi* of Mallinatha, the 19th Tirthankara, is Aparajita, and is described as *Haridvarna* seated on that fabulous creature named *astapada* or *sarabha* and carrying a shield in one of her hands According to the Svetambaras, she is *krsnavarna*, seated on a lotus and carrying rosary in one of her hands

(xviii) There is some difference between the two schools in the observance of the *pariharavisuddha caritra* type of vow

(xix) Besides, there are differences in the version of the texts of the schools according to the two schools [96]

But so far as the original principles are concerned, there seems to be no difference between the two sects and actually these differences partain only to the external rituals

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77 Mae acetate dhamme pannatte
78 Manmohan Chakravarti, *Notes on the remains on Dhauli and in the caves of Udaigiri and Khandagiri* p 2
79 *Avasyakacurni*, II, vv 145ff, Vrtti pp 418-26, *Avasyaka Bhasya* pp 159ff
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83 *Dasavaikalika*, VI vs 20-21
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90 *SBE* XII, pp 157-66
91 *Avasyakacurni* pp 406 ff
92 Jain *Life as depicted in Jain canons* p 28
93 C J Shah *op cit* p 70
94 2500 years of Bhagwan Mahavira , *Illustrated Weekly of India*, Dec 1974, p 9
95 But the Gopya section of the Digambaras does not agree with the Svetambaras and holds that women do get *moksa* directly
96 As these are not a few, it is not practicable to give them all here

# JAINISM IN GUPTA PERIOD
# (A.D. 319-600)

**A Short Political History of the Period·**

Sri Gupta has been regarded as the founder and the first historical king of the Gupta dynasty [1] But nothing definite is known about his life and the extent of his empire It is suggested that the territory from Ayodhya eastward, including Prayag and Saranath, might have been under him Some scholars like Chattopadhyaya include Magadha in the original Gupta territory [2] In between Sri Gupta and Ghatotkaca, is Chandragupta I, who has been worngly confused with Ghatotkaca Guptasya of the Vaisali seal He is said to have been ruling between A D 300 and 320 [3] In the Allahabad Pillar Inscription[4], Chandragupta I has been called the first king of the Imperial Gupta dynasty The most significant event of Chandragupta I's life is his marriage with the Lichchavi princess Kumaradevi Evidence of this union is provided by the fact that Samudragupta, the son of Chandragupta I and Kumaradevi, is invariably referred to as 'Lichchavi-dauhitra' in the Gupta records [5] The reputation of the Lichchavis at this time was not so high as that of the period of Gautam Buddha, yet this alliance brought social and political unification between North and South Bihar

In a reasonably short period Chandragupta succeeded in establishing the hegemony of the Guptas over the large part of the upper and central Gangetic Valley, including eastern parts of U P , Ayodhya (Saketa) Prayag, Magadha and Vaisali With the rise of

the Gupta Imperial power under Chandragupta I, Magadha again began to play the key role in the history of India after an inter regnum of more than four hundred years

Chandragupta I nominated his son Samudragupta as the successor to the throne,[6] though we have evidences that Kaca declared sovereignty as against Samudragupt by issuing gold coins [7] Though several theories have been given about the 'Kaca dispute', it is clear from the Allahabad Pillar Inscription that a rival brother of Samudragupt contested the latter According to Altekar,[8] verse five of the inscription 'probably referred to a war of succession ' After nomination of Samudragupta by Chandragupta I, Kaca might have raised the banner of revolt against the assumption of sovereignty by Samudragupta Kaca might have succeeded to hold his own for a very brief period, but Samudragupta soon overcame him and established his authority over the whole empire

According to the Gupta Epigraphs[9], Samudragupta was succeeded by his son Chandragupta II [10] He is called Devaraja[11] Devagupta[12] and Deva Sri[13] also But on the testimony of a lost dramatic work *Devi Chandragupta* of Vishakhadatta, it is suggested that Ramagupta succeeded Samudragupta Though not much evidences can be put in support of his view, yet the copper coins of his name and literary evidence of Vishakhadatta leads us to rely on Ramagupta's historicity The scholars are of the view now that Chandragupta might have been chosen by Samudragupa for succession, but his elder brother occupied the throne for one cause or another Yet the historicity of Ramagupta cannot be said to have been proved This has to wait until gold coins of Ramagupta and any inscription of Ramagupta about his being a member of the imperial Gupta family have been discovered

Chandragupta II's long period of reign came to an end sometime

between A D 415-416 and according to Bilsad Stone Pillar Inscription[14], his son Kumaragupta I, born of queen Dhruvadevi, ascended the throne after him Among the Gupta emperors, Kumaragupta I alone is credited with the issue of a large number of family coins and inscriptions The period of Kumaragupta was not a peaceful one and he faced the resistance of the Pushyamitra[15] and the Hunas [16] But there was no actual loss of the territory of the empire under Kumaragupta I

From the various inscriptions, it seems that a war of succession started after the death of Kumaragupta I in A D 455 and Puru, Skanda, Ghatotkaca and Chandragupta III declared themselves as sovereign rulers But soon Skandagupta came out victorious and asserted his authority over the entire empire He had quelled the great revolt of the Pushyamitras,[17] but his greatest achievement was his repelling the Hunas [18]

The last known date of Skanda Gupta is A D 467-468[19] He might have lived for two to three years more, and thereafter he was succeeded by Kumaragupta II who appears to have maintained the empire more or less intact In A D 476, Buddha Gupta got the throne and this has been confirmed by the inscriptions found at various places in India [20] He appears to be the last Gupta emperor to have reigned in almost full glory over the extensive empire After him, the golden days of the empire appears to be passing away His reign must have come to an end soon after A D 495-96

Buddha Gupta was succeeded by his younger brother Narasimha Gupta Baladitya Soon after his ascendency, he had to face the serious Huna invasions The great leader of the Hunas, Toramana, is said to have occupied Nandapura (Pataliputra) and to have gone as far as Gauda (Bengal) in the east and for a time to have resided at Varanasi in Kasi country[21] According to Hiuen Tsang[22] the

plundering Huna raids had economically ruined the Gupta empire and obviously Baladitya appears to have renounced the throne and to have gone to live in Nalanda monastery

Though the Hunas had disappared by the time Kumaragupta III ascended the throne, their plundering raids and oppressive rule had damaged the political prestige and the economy of the empire The Gupta rule remained confined to the parts of Bengal, Magadha and eastern U P [23] He was succeeded by Vishnu Gupta Chandraditya[24] who contined to exercise his suzerainty over Bihar and Bengal The Maukharis, the Vardhanas and the Gaudas, emerged as political powers, acting almost independent of the Gupta monarch, and finally the dynasty came to its close, after a period of 231 years, as mentioned by Jinasena[25]

**Position of Jain religion during this period**

By the end of the third century A D ,Jainism had taken firm roots throughout India Starting from its original home in Bihar and U P it had slowly spread to different countries like Kalinga, in the South east, Mathura and Malwa in the North and Deccan and the Tamil lands in the South as well So far our region of Bihar is concerned, the Guptas, who inherited the power on this land, helped the revival and consolidation of Brahmanism In spite of this, it would be incorrect to hold that Jainism got a set back during this period Even though the rulers of the dynasty were primarily Vaisnavites, they displayed a remarkable religious tolerance The remarks of Havell is important while he says "the capital of the Gupta emperors become the centre of Brahmanical culture, but the masses followed the religious tolerations of their forefathers, and Buddhist and Jaina monasteries continued to be public Schools and Universities for the greater part of India [26]

Fahien who came India during this period, also noticed the

decline of Budhism and the flourishing rise of Brahmanism Despite their leanings towards Brahmanism, Gupta rulers were tolerant towards Buddhism and Jainism [27] On the basis of ancient inscriptions, statues, and temples, we may say that there was religious liberty at the time of the Guptas The Gupta kings used to respect Buddhism and Jainism Sometimes, we find that the Hindus, forgettting the religious intolerance, constructed and helped in constructing Buddhist and Jain temples

The most outstanding characteristic of this period is that various religious ideas were freely exchanged and that people of different faith came closer to one another[28] The Jain and Buddhist teachers Rsabhadeva and Buddha, were considered as Hindu *avataras* [29] Members of one and the same lineage and dynasty independently and freely acknowledged their faith in different religious sects

Dr A M Ghatagi[30] has tried to prove that in Bihar, 'the country of its origin', the Jain religion lost much of its influence during Gupta period and thereafter According to him, the age of the Gupta imperialism marked a revival of Hinduism and decline of both Jainism and Buddhism [31] But this theory does not appear to be beyond doubt as we have evidences of the flourishing condition of Jainism in North and South Bihar as well

If we believe the accounts of Hiuen Tsang, it seems that during the Gupta period, the Jainas occupied the very areas once held by the Buddhists According to him, though at Vaisali, there were some hundreds of Buddhist establishments, yet with the exception of three of four, the rest were dilapidated and deserted and the 'Brethen were very few There were some tens of Deva temples, the various sects lived pellmell and the Digambaras flourished' [32] With regard to a tope (stupa) on the Vipula mountain, he informs of the Digambaras

residing and practising austerities there [33] Thus the assumption that there was a decline of Jainism in Bihar during this period is without any basis

**Literary Evidences**

In a number of Jain and non-Jain texts, there are frequent references to the Jainas Bhasa[34] Subandhu[35] and Bana[36] frequently refer to the Jainas It appears from the Subandhu's *Vasavadatt*[37] that the Digambara Jainas were looked at as the bitterest rivals of the Hindu Philosophers This work was in existence in the early Gupta period and is mentioned by Bana The poet Bana had some regards for the Jainas, as one Jain *viruda* was a childhood friend of this writer [38] Bana openly praises the Jainas for their magnanimity Though the Jain and non-Jain literary sources give some idea about the position of Jain religion in Bihar, we have to depend more on the epigraphical sources to support our evidences

**Royal Patronage to Jainism**

During this period, Jainism did not get royal patronage as it got during the Mauryas, and we don't have much evidences to show that *samantas* and higher officials of the administration were devout Jainas, although a few names occur in the list Many old Jain centres continued to flourish and the Jain *munis* used to move freely from the western parts of India to Bihar, Bengal and Orissa The Chinese travellers say that non-violence was prevalent in the society and this was to be confirmed from the daily routine of individuals All the available sources indicate that by the beginning of the 4th century A D , Jainism became an all India religion [39] Generally, however, in North India, the Svetambaras were prominent and in the South, the Digambaras

Among the Gupta emperors, Devagupta has been assumed to be influenced by the ideas of Jainism [40] It is said that he turned a

Jain ascetic after being initiated by a Svetambara Jain *Muni*, Harigupta [41]

We have the earliest Gupta Jain inscription of Ramagupta, which is engraved on Jain images [42] While at one hand it shows that Ramagupta had some genuine respect for the Jainas, the religious toleration as well of early Gupta emperors is proved by this instance

It is said that Chandragupta II 'Vikramaditya' (c A D 375-414) came into contact with the celebrated Jainacharya Siddhasena Divakara Siddhasena was the *ksapanaka,* who was one of the nine gems of Chandragupta's court It is said that Siddhasena influenced the Gupta emperor by showing a miracle in the Mahakala temple at Ujjain and converted him to Jainism [43]

At Rajgir, there are two rock cut Sonabhandara caves,[44] which have been assigned to the third or fourth century A D Both the caves were first noticed by Buchanan in 1812, who says that it is 'the only place of worship belonging to the Jainas at Rajgriha that can claim antiquity [45] Out of these two, the western cave has been identified by Cunningham with the famous Saptaparni cave where first Buddhist Council was held '[46] Subsequently, when the other cave was discovered, Beglar suggested that the two caves belonged to Buddha and his disciple Ananda [47] But these suggestions have been discarded in view of the evidences provided by a number of short inscriptions, on the inner walls, the door jambs and on the front wall One of them is in shell characters Others are mostly obliterated But the one to the right of the door was read by T Bloch [48] The above mentioned Sanskrit inscription runs thus, "the sage Vairadeva of great lustre, the jewel among teachers, caused to be made for the purpose of attaining salvation, and for liberation, two auspicious caves worthy of ascetics, in which were placed the image of arhats "[49] Bloch assigned the inscription to the third or

fourth century A D on palaeographic grounds [50] Konow pushed back the date of the cave by a century [51] Shah has supported Konow and identified Muni Vaira of the inscription with Vajra, the 'great Svetambara Acarya who died in the 584th year of Mahavira *nirvana*, [52] He admits the existence of only two Jain *Acaryas* of the name Vajra, the first of them mentioned in the *Avasyaka Niryukti* and the second in the *Triloka Prajnapati* Of these, the former finds mention in the chronological incompatibility involved in this identification Shah says that the inscription may be posthumous [53] According to him the Sonabhandar cave agrees essentially with the Maurya Barabar and Nagarjuni caves and perhaps belongs to a date not far removed from them

But it is interesting to note that these Sonabhandar caves are similar to those at Udaigiri (Vidisa) in that they are not completely rock-cut The sockets on the exterior of the Sonabhandara caves indicate that originally some kind of wooden extension was appended on them A brick super-structure and a verandah in front of the eastern cave are also noticeable These features are present in the Gupta caves at Udaigiri also [54] So, the date of the inscription, as suggested by Bloch, has been retained by Kuraishi and Ghosh and the characters of the inscription as well as the six figures of Jain Tirthankaras carved in relief on the southern wall of the eastern cave confirm this date Close to the inscription in the western Sonabhandara cave, there is a faintly perceptible outline of the lower half of a Jain figure [55] Inside the cave, there is another relief in outline depicting a seated Jain accompanied by an artistic female figure holding *curni* In those details, the caves correspond to the details of the inscription The association of Digambara Jain sect with Vaibharagiri is confirmed by Hiuen Tsang,[56] who observed that the Digambaras lodged at the Pi-pulo (Vaibhara) mountain So, the evidence about the Svetambara Muni Vajra seems to be dubious

and Muni Vajra finding mention in the inscription of the third-fourth century A D cannot be the Svetambara Muni Vajra who had passed away in the first century A D

The earliest Jain image of this period known so far from eastern India represents the twentysecond Tirthankara, Neminath, in the ruined temple on the Vaibhara hill of Rajgir [57] On the basis of the mutilated inscription referring to '(Ma) haraja (dhi) ra (ja) Sri Candra' in early Gupta characters, Dr Chandra comes to the conclusion that the image is of the period of Chandragupta II [58] The Jina is shown seated in the *dhyana mudra* on a pedestal

The pedestal of the image represents a conch shell flanked by the *Dharmacakra* on either sides The interesting feature of the sculpture is the representation of a young prince, standing in front of a wheel which also serves the purpose of the halo The standing statue seems to be of Aristhanemi (Neminatha) in a glance, but according to U P Shah, it is *cakra-purusa* only [59] *Chakrapurusa* is an imagination of Gupta period[60] and therefore these statues can be considered definitely of the Gupta period [61]

There are six Jain figures carved on the southern wall inside the eastern Sonabhandara cave [62] Of these six reliefs, five are carved on the side of the entrance to the cave and the sixth stands in isolation on the other side Among the first five figures, two represent Padmaprabhu, the third Parsvanatha and the last two, Mahavira The lonely sixth relief on the other side of the entrance is larger and presents the same breadth and style as of the other figures

The policy of religious toleration of Skanda Gupta gave free scope to private philanthropy creating endowments in favour of different religions then prevaling in the country The Kahaum Pillar Stone Inscription records an endowment in favour of Jainism in eastern U P [63] This inscription[64] has been found at Kahaum in eastern

Gorakhpur district of U P [65] The script of this inscription is Brahmi and is dated in the year 141 of the Gupta era corresonding to 460 A D ,[66] the fifth year of the Gupta emperor Skanda-gupta's reign (c 455-467 A D ) [67] From this inscription we learn that this place was called Kakubha[68] which was already pure from association with the Jain saints *(Jaina sadhu-samsarga pute)* We are told of the setting of five images *(pancendra)* of Tirthankaras (probably Adinatha, Santi, Nemi, Parsva and Mahavira) by a person called Madra He is noted here as full of affection for Brahmans, religious preceptors and ascetics, and also as the devotee of Jain Tirthankaras The inscription appears to be a Digambara record This record is important as it shows the image worship in Jainism during this period There are traces of Jain shrines near the pillar bearing the inscriptions [69]

Jainism was prevalent during the period of Buddha Gupta which is shown from a Copper plate Inscription of Gupta Era 159 (479 A D ), found at Paharpur (Rajashahi district) of Bengal [70] The inscription shows a Brahmin donating a piece of land to a Jain *Vihara* belonging to the *Panchastupa* sect *(nikaya)* founded by the Nirgrantha Sramanacharya Guhanandin of Kasi [71] Guhanandin is stated to have been residing in this *Vihara* along with his disciples and grand disciples *(sisya-prasisyadhisthita-vihara)* The gift was made for provision of perfumes, flowers and light for worship of the divine *Arhats* This indicates that this Jain sect might have been the Svetambaras, and not the Digambaras, who do not permit worship with flowers, bringing in insects, which may be killed So, the suggestion of R K Mookherjee[72] that the *Panchastupa* sect might have been 'Svetambaras' cannot be set aside The Copper Plate mentions a 'Parambhattaraka', who is probably king Buddhagupta [73] While at one hand this plate shows the close contact of Jainas of Benaras with those of Paharpur, on the other, it is sufficient also

to indicate the religious toleration during the period under review [74]

**Other Jain Antiquities and Monuments of this Period :**

Besides the aforesaid findings, we have sufficient Jain antiquities and monuments found throughout in parts of Bihar All these findings strengthen our point that this region was still alive for the Jains and they occupied prestigeous position here Some of those places and the findings are given below

*Chausa* At Chausa (district Bhojpur) in Bihar, sixteen metal images of the Jinas have been discovered, six of them belonging to this period [75] Among these, two represent the eighth Jina Chandraprabha,[76] the other two represent the first JinaRsabhadeva,[77] but the remaining two remain unidentified due to corrosion and the consequent lack of details [78] All the Jinas are shown seated in *dhyanamudra* on a pedestal and uniformly have the *srivasta* symbol in the middle of their chest and a *siras-cakra* at the back The images of Chandraprabha appear to be later than those of Rsabhadeva [79]

*Vaisali* In the North Bihar, the Jainas continued to flourish in Basarh and its adjoining areas Statues of Jinas and Tirthankaras were even made and worshipped throughout the time Some small images kept in the Vaisali Museum appear to be nude and hence Jainistic in character [80] A Jain image believed to be of the Gupta period was found in a well in village Bariarpur in Sakra police station in the Muzaffarpur district and is in the Chandanpatti Museum (a private collection) in the same district [81] These Jain images indicate that Jainism continued its existence in the Vaisali region in the Gupta period

*Nathanagar* At Nathanagar, a suburb of Bhagalpur town, a stone sculpture of Tirthankar Adinatha is kept in the Sri Champapur Digambar Jain Siddhaksetra The temple itself is an old one and said to be constructed in V S 1559 [82] The statue is in *khadgasana*

pose and the *vritabandha jatajuta* (roundish hair style) reminds us of the iconographic tradition followed during the Gupta and later Gupta periods It is curious to note that this idol of Tirthankar Adinatha has not been accompanied by any Yaksa or Yaksini [83] The statue is considered to have belonged to circa 5th-6th century A D [84]

Opposite the town of Sultanganj in Bhagalpur, three hillocks are there, known as Jahangiri and Murli or Vyasakarna In the latter hillocks are carved a number of Vaisnava, Saiva and Saura (Solar) images and also a Buddha and a Jain Tirthankara [85] The sculpture carved here date from the early Gupta period to post Gupta period and are interesting artistically as well as iconographically [86]

**Characteristics of Jain images in the Gupta Period :**

The Gupta period showed a marked development in the iconographic characteristics of a Jain figure The Indian sculpture was at the height of its glory during the Gupta dynasty A lot of importance was given to ornament and although the Gupta period sculptures were identical to those of Kushana period, they were far better carved with their respective coat of arms and surrounded by other Gods and Goddesses Not only do we find in such images the particular *lanchana*[87] incorporated but miniature figures of a *Yaksa* and *Sasana* devout invariably included Later on, the statues of *Yaksas* and *Sasana* devouts were made independently and the tradition of carving Tirthankara images over their head became a regular feature [88] Other marks, such as trilinear umbrella, a drumplayer surmounting it, a pair of elephant on two sides of the umbrella and a *dharma-cakra* symbol attended by a pair of either bulls or deer form parts of a Jain sculpture.[89] It was late in the Gupta period also that the practice of showing the *Navagraha* along the two sides of a Tirthankar figure that came to be in vogue and the useful number of the *Navagrahas* was confined to eight, 'Ketu' being left out the initial stage [90]

It is also noticeable that the images of the Jain Tirthankaras, with clothing and drapery, date from the Gupta times This development sharpened the distinction of the Svetambaras from the orthodox who were designated as Digambaras [91]

**Jain Councils during Gupta Period :**

During the time of the Guptas, a very important event connected with the Jain history took place, as it is said, the cononical and other literature of the Jainas was put down in writing In the beginning of the fourth century A D , we find two Jain Councils meeting almost simultaneously, at Mathura, under Aryaskandila, and at Valabhi, under Arya Nagarjuna Though these places were outside Bihar region, but the effects of these councils have some bearings on the literature of the Jains of Bihar The Svetambara canonical works, as available today, often prefer the textual readings of the Mathura Council

Again, there was a second Council at Valabhi, under the chairmanship of Devardhigani Ksamasraman, to edit and preserve the Jain canon The present Svetambara canon is supposed to follow this second Valabhi Council A large number of commentaries, known as *Niryuktis* and *Churnis*, were written in this period and sometimes Sanskrit was used in Jain works like *Tattvarthadhigama-sutra* and *Nyayavrata*

Though the Svetambara-Digambara differences were fully maintained in these Councils, we have not much evidence of the effects of the Councils of Jainas at Mathura and Valabhi in the 4th-5th centuries A D How many of the canonical literature prior to the classification of books by the Bihar Jainas were complied, cannot be determined [92] But one thing can safely be concluded on the above mentioned grounds that the Jainas had by now spread more or less all over India and they remained important religious community

to be reckoned with in the Indian society during this period and thereafter as well

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# LAST PHASE OF JAINISM IN BIHAR
## (From A.D. 600 to the Muslim Conquest)

**A Short Political History of the Period :**
**Maukharis and Later Guptas**

The break up of the Gupta empire about the middle of the 6th century A D was followed by the rise of several independent states in Northern India, two of which were founded by the Maukharis and the Later Guptas, both of whom exercised political authority in the region of modern Bihar

The Maukhari rule over this part has been referred to from epigraphic records[1] and other sources The Sirapara Rock Edict[2] very much proves the Maukhari rule over Magadha The portions of North Bihar was also under the rule of the Maukharis[3], though most of the historians are silent on this aspect

But the two inscriptions found at Aphsad[4] and Deo-Baranak[5] (about 30 k m south-west of Arrah in Bhojpur District) supply a list of eleven kings[6] belonging to Later Guptas The last four kings of this dynasty ruled in Magadha and it was their central seat of authority The very fact that a line of kings with names ending in Gupta was ruling in this region gives rise to the presumption that the two were connected in some way They were ruling, or had extended their suzerainty, upto Malwa in the west The Apshad inscription tells us that the fourth ruler of this empire Kumaragupta

went to Prayag (Allahabad) and died there This probably means that he advanced as far as Prayag in course of his victorious campaign against the Maukharis It is not unlikely that Prayag formed a part of his dominions[7] but this cannot be regarded as certain The struggle for supremacy between the two rival powers continued in the next generation

**Foreign Rules :**

But in the same time, Magadha and the surrounding regions became a prey to foreign invasions The Chalukya king Kirtivarman, who ruled from A D 567 to 597, is said to have defeated among others, the kings of Anga, Vanga and Magadha [8] The powerful king Sroribtsan, who ruled between A D 581 and 600, led a victorious campaign to Central India, the usual designation of a large part of India including Bihar and sometimes also U P [9] These invasions also caused the disintegration of the Later Gupta empire and led to the rise of Sasanka to power in the east Both Bana and Hiuen Tsang suggest that he was a powerful ruler His kingdom included Karnasuvarna, Magadha and the intervening kingdom or tracts of Tirabhukti and Kasi [10]

**Sasanka to Harshavardhana :**

The actual reference is not available of how this region was transferred from Sasanka to Harshavardhana The Chinese traveller Ma-Twan-Lin says that Harsha assumed the title of king of Magadha in A D 641,[11] but he made no attempts to restore the old Magadhan Imperial capital Pataliputra [12] From the available sources, it is learnt that he kept major portion of Bihar in his possession till his death [13] During the later part of his life, he appointed Madhava Gupta as the provincial administrator of Magadha [14] He was someway connected with Harsha and was probably his maternal uncle [15] He belonged to the lineage of the Later Guptas He must have advanced in age when he became an independent king in Magadha after

Harsha's death and he had probably a very short reign

**The Petty Rulers of Bihar after Harsha's death :**

The death of Harsha was followed by an upheaval of an unprecedented scale [16] The Later Guptas asserted their independence, the Maukharis raised their heads and following their footsteps, Arunasva, the minister turned king of Tirabhukti, also did the same in his own region, but unfortunately he could not succeed on accont of the Tibetan invasion in the wake of Wang-Hiuen-tse's mission [17] The Tibetan authority continued in Tirhut till A D 703 [18]

The decline of the Tibetan authority coincided with the rise of Yasovarman, who brought under his control all the territories between Magadha and the Himalyas After his death, there prevailed an anarchical condition because of the disruption of the political system which divided the region into tiny states ruled by petty rulers This anarchy or 'matsya nyaya' [19] was too intolerable to be borne longer For putting an end to that state of affairs, Gopala came to power in about 750 A D In such an effort, he got the popular backing He not only ended the state of political anarchy in Bengal,[20] but also extended Pala dominion in Magadha [21]

**The rule of Palas in Bihar ·**

Gopala was succeeded by Dharmapala and after him Devapala got the throne He is said to have ruled over the whole of Northern India from the Himalayas upto the Vindhyas and from the eastern to the western ocean [22] The capital of his vast empire was situated in the modern Munger region of Bihar But after his death, the Pala empire shrunk and remained confined to Magadha and Anga only But again it revived under Mahipala He recovered his patrimony in North Bengal and extended his authority upto Benaras [23] So, Mahipala ruled over a fairly extensive kingdom which included large parts of Bengal and whole of Bihar Never was the Pala

dominion so large in extent as it was at the time of the death of Devapala Towards the last years of his reign, Mahipala appears to have suffered defeat at the hands of Rajendra Chola whose army invaded Northern India But he soon went back to South India, leaving Mahipala as the king of a large portion of Northern India With the death of Mahipala I, the Pala empire again began to decline with many feudatory families coming into prominence

During Vigrahapala III (1054-1072 A D ), we find several petty kingdoms in existence in this region Vanga had become independent and in Anga (east Bihar), a Rastrakuta family under Mathanadeva had emerged as a ruling dynasty In Magadha the Chikora family had established its authority at least over Gaya region The Pala sovereignty in North Bihar continued even after Vigrahapala III From the Maner and the Lar plates as well as from the recently discovered inscriptions in the Shahabad district, it appears that the Gahadevalas ruled over a major portion of this region of Northern India [24] The king of Kasi Govindacandra[25] successfully fought with several kings including those of the Gauda, Vanga, Champaran and Nepal [26]

In the last quarter of the 11th century A D when the southerners were disturbing the political life in North Bihar, the Karnatas gained a permanent footing in the eastern part of North India and carved out for themselves small independent kingdoms which were destined to play very important role in the following centuries [27] From the Kamat (Simaraongarh) inscription,[28] it is learnt that Nanyadeva, who was a Karnata officer of the Palas, revolted and established a kingdom in Tirabhukti in 1097 A D [29] He got some success against the Palas and the Senas but was ultimately defeated by Vijayasena of Vanga and he met the same fate on his own dominion of Mithila also [30] Nanyadeva was the immediate neighbour of the Gahadavalas [31] We learn from the Kalha inscription of Sobhadeva (1079 A D ) that

as early as 1079 A D , Sobhadeva declared himself independent in Gorakhpur region and extended his territory upto Saran in North Bihar [32] Nanya avoided coming into direct conflict with the Gahadavalas and remained satisfied with his own fortunes [33] He ruled for about fifty years from 1097 to 1147 A D One of his sons, Malladeva, ruled over portion of North Bihar Even his successors ruled over parts of North Bihar till the invasion of the Muslims

The last known date of any authentic Pala king is 1161[34] when we find Madanapala ruling over the South Bihar region However, we know about one Govindapala, who certainly ruled for at least four years over Nalanda and Gaya region We have the Sunga dynasty in Bihar in about 1200 A D when the ferocious Muslim hoard was rapidly marching towards the east The powerful dynasties of Delhi and Kanauj had tried their strength separately and had been swept away by the terrible storm of the invasion There was no king to offer even a feeble resistance, and Bakhtiar Khilzi overran the whole of the state from one end to another and the last vestige of the Jain learning and culture disappeared from Bihar in that storm

## POSITION OF JAINISM DURING THIS PERIOD

In the age of commentary and Bhasya, the Jain religion could neither get state protection nor could it produce any great and influencial ascetic in Bihar But this sacred land had still attraction for the Jainas Therefore, not only the intellectual teachers and authors but even the laymen maintained in incessant chain of religious visits to sacred places in this reigion like Rajgriha, Campa, Vaisali, Sammeda Sikhara and Gaya etc The Jain preachers visited these places not only to preach their religion but also to make a full survey of the Jain places they visited They acquired knowledge of several languages during their travels and got opportunity to know the *Janapadas* well This knowledge benifited even their disciples In course of their journey the Jain saints used to go to the places

of birth, initiation and enlightenment of the Tirthankaras [35] Descriptions of their travels are found in the literatures of the six century and onwards

It is interesting to note that some new places emerged as the Jain centres also during this period South Bihar became the main field of Jain preachings Relying upon the story of Sudarsana Swami which had also then achieved importance, Pataliputra got its acceptance as a Jain place of pilgrimage in the 7th century The Kamaldaha *ksetra* (the salvation place of Sudarsana Swami) was installed after the 8th century A D [36] Even afterwards discussions on Jainism and its philosophy were held here in the medieval period [37]

**Literary Evidences :**

The position of Jainism in Bihar is described in the Jain literature of that period Though the writers and authors were born outside Bihar, their reverence for the said sacred place did not lessen, and they had been keeping intellectual and spiritual contact with this part of India as well Sanskrit was adopted by the Buddhists and the Jainas as the medium of their literature, but it has been found that the common people used popular dialects

In a number of Jain and non Jain texts, there are frequent references of the Jainas The court poet of Harshavardhana[38] Bana openly praises the Jainas for their magnanimity in his *Kadambari* [39] In the *Harshacharita,*[40] Banabhatta mentions the three sects of the Jainas, viz , the *Arhats,* the *Svetapatas* and the *Kesalunchakas* He speaks also of *Ksapanakas* and *Nagnatas* The *Svetapatas* obviously are the Svetambaras The word *Arhat* denotes the followers of *Arhat* which stands for both the Buddha and a Jain Tirthankara But as in the *Brhatasamhita* the God of the *Arhat* is described as *Dignasah, Arhat* probably signify some Jain sect, the member of which went

naked[41] Sri Nathu Ram Premi identifies the *Arhats* with the Jain ascetics of the *Yapaniya Samgha*, who are known to have remained naked, borne peacock feathers on their heads and stuck to certain rules about food [42] *Ksapanakas* and *Nagnatas* may have been identical with the *Kesalunchakas* Dandin mentions not only a *Ksapanaka* but also a *Ksapanaka-Vihara* which is further identified with a Jain monastery *(jainayatan)* [43]

The *Bappabhatti-carita* throws some light over the personal history of king Dharmapala Though the king was by faith a Buddhist, he equally respected the scholars of other sects Jain *savant*, like Bappabhatti, and the poet, Vikpati of the Brahmanical sect, enjoyed no lesser regard in his court than did the Buddhist saints and writers [44]

The Digambara logicians, Samantabhadra (c 600 A D), Akalanka or Akalankadeva (c 750 A D) and Vidyananda (c 800 A D) show the popularity of Jain philosophy during their time [45] References to the Jainas in the *Bhagvata*[46] and *Brahmanda*[47] also indirectly show its popularity in this period

A lot of information is gathered on the history of Bihar from the *Padmacarita* of Acharya Ravisena of the 7th century A D It is learnt that during the regin of Harshavardhana, Jain religion was in flourishing condition in this region Temples of Tirthankaras were being erected and the Jain teachers were always moving about in these sacred places, propagating their faith

In course of stating the principles of Jainism, Acharya Jinasena who flourished in the 9th century has described in his text the flourishing condition of Jainism in this part of India [48]

Acharya Haribhadra of the same century has also referred to Kusumpur or Pataliputra, Kollaga Sannivesa, Champa, Mithila and

Kshiti-Pratisthita in his work *Samarai chakaha* From the description of these towns, it is gathered that in that age the traders, bankers and other rich personalities had constructed several Jain temples in their areas The amount collected in the worship of temples was supposed to be well utilised From the *Brhatkatha kosa* of Harisena, a text composed in c 931 A D , it is evident that Sravasti had become a famous centre of Digambara religion[49] From the same text, it is also learnt that at Rajgriha, there had already begun a contention between the Jainas and the Buddhists In the legend of Jinasena[50] and Mitrasri, it is indicated that Jainism had been adopted mostly by the middle class people, like caravan men, architects and potters etc The gentries were mostly worshippers of Jainism and they organised different festivals for the growth of the religion

The *Vividhatirthakalpa,* composed by Jinaprabhasuri, is a good work on Jain pilgrimage and has its importance for giving valued geographical and historical information of the area under review of that period

**Foreign Accounts .**

In the memoirs of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, who visited India in the beginning of the 7th century A D , we come across with the information of the existence of Jainism in the areas of Bihar He writes that Jainism was quite popular in different places of India during his visits After going through his accounts, it appears that at that time the Digambara Jains were more popular than the Svetambaras

At the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit (629-645 A D ), the cities of Pataliputra and Vaisali were in ruins He refers to several hundred *sangharams* at Vaisali, which were mostly dilapidated The followers of the Nirgranthas (Jain ascetics) were numerous [51] This seems to be the last definite evidence of the existence of a sizeable Jain

population in North Bihar

Rajgriha, which was intimately associated with the activities of Mahavira, was a flourishing Jain centre during Hiuen Tsang's visit He saw many Digambaras on the Vipula mountain While narrating them, he says, 'On the spot where the Buddha once preached, many Digambaras now lodge here and practice asusterities incessantly, they turn round with the Sun, watching it from its rising to its setting '[52] The statement of this Chinese traveller is enough to show that Buddhist hold over the Vaibhara mountain had disappeared by the seventh century A D He also refers to the building of the great monastery at Nalanda and mentions incidentally that a Nirgrantha, who was a great astrologer and prophet, had prophesied the future success of the new building He also mentions several temples and *chaityas* at Champa[53] and Kosala[54] frequented by heretics of different cults

**Jain Antiquities and Monuments ·**

Archaeological remains and epigraphical findings of the period give us an idea of the state of Jainism in Bihar during the period in question Both the Digambaras and the Svetambaras worshipped the Tirthankaras and many other Gods and Goddesses The Jain sculptures belonging to the period from A D 600-1200 mostly contain the figures of the Tirthankaras with their attendants, Sarswati, Ambika, Kubera and Naga etc [55] The introduction of the twentyfour Yakshas and the same number of Yakshinis as attendants of the Tirthankaras was a new development to Jain iconography of the 8th century A D Later on, the eight planets on two sides of a Tirthankara also came to be figured The latter practice was first developed in the eastern school of medieval art In the western school, the eight planets were generally carved on the pedestal of the statue of a Tirthankara Soon after the period (600-1200 A D ), we have also the figures of the months of the twentyfour Jinas, each

with a child in her lap All these sculptures are mostly in bronze or stone As the stone sculpture began to be damaged by the invaders at many places, Jainas started casting metal images later on and Nalanda was the centre of such activities [56] The Jain literature also refers to wood carving Wood images were carved during the Pala rule in Magadha [57] Thus from the 6th century to the 12th century and also in the later centuries, Jainism was propagated through the medium of Jain art Consequently the Jain places were established on the mountain heights and in the lonely places, amidst natural beauty and away from the din and bustle of the city life

There are so many places in Bihar which have Jain antiquities and monuments of the period under review It would be helpful in assessing the position of Jainism in Bihar if we come across all these findings at those places

*Vaisali:* Now, starting from Vaisali, the birth place of Mahavira, and once the capital of the Lichchavi republic, we find the remains, mostly religious in character, which show that images of the Jain Tirthankaras were made and honoured at Vaisali

Somtimes in 1892, V A Smith visited the village of Baniya[58] and is said to have discovered two statues of the Jain Tirthankaras about 500 yards to the west of the village,[59] but the images were untraceable at the time of Bloch's visit to the village ten years after the former [60]

An image of Mahavira (in black basalt stone) of the Pala period was discovered at Vaisali, which has been kept in a modern temple situated to the west of the mound (Raja Vishal ka garh) [61] We have reference to another Jain image discovered at Vaisali in a recent excavation [62] Besides, we have no information regarding any other Jain antiquities or inscription[63] belonging to the subsequent periods in this region, though this place was closely associated with

Mahavira [64]

***Rajgriha :*** Sufficient information is gathered regarding the Jain history from the archaeological remains found at Rajgriha Right from the Guptas to the 12th century, Jain statues were being made at Rajgriha [65] This place was also important from the commercial point of view and thus it never faded out from the political eyes [66]

One of the most sacred spots of the Jainas at Rajgriha is the Vaibhara hill, on the top of which are the remains of an ancient Jain temple The temple, as exposed, consists of a central chamber, surrounded by a court, with rows of cells all around The central chamber and the cells are provided with niches for containing image [67] The date of the temple is uncertain Built in brick bats, it was meant to house sculptures of different period, from the early Gupta to the eight century A D [68]

Several images relating to Jain cult have been discovered from Rajgriha of the period under review Some broken images have been found on the hills, which can be dated between the 6th and the 7th centuries A D A seated image of Rsabha has been found, on the pedestal of which are images of two bulls and a wheel The image bears on the base an inscription the palaeography of which helps in fixing its date The inscriptions, in nail headed characters of the eighth century A D , describes that the image was the pious gift of the teacher Vasantanandin [69] Chandra[70] observas that this image of the 8th century marks the transition from the Gupta art to the late medieval or Pala art in eastern India A very conspicuous transitional feature that exists in its throne is a single row of lotus petals pointing upwards on the throne On the seated images of the Gupta period, the lotus has no place while in the later medieval images the throne is decorated with two rows of lotus-petals, the upper pointing upward and the lower pointing downward [71] Certain

features of this image indicate a tendency of fresh observation of nature

On the top of the Udaigiri hill, a very large number of Jain temples are found built in comparatively recent years In a Jain temple here, a seated image of Parsvanatha was found Traces of letters on the lower part of the base make it attributable to nineth century A D [72]

Another interesting image of 9th century found here is that of Munisuvrata, with his *sasanadevi*, Bahurupini, shown in a reclining position on a cot below the pedestal of the Jina There are also a few other such images known to us [73] One of them belongs to the collection of Mr Bijay Singh Nahar, Calcutta, and another is in cave 8 (eight) of Khandagiri [74]

Also belonging to the Nahar collection in Calcutta are a few other Jain images from Bihar One of them shows a Tirthankara seated in meditation on the top, and below a seated couple under the spreading branches of a tree [75] Another is the upper fragment of a Tirthankara, ascribable to about the nineth century A seated Ambika in the collection is tylistically attributable to the ninth-tenth century [76]

To the south-west of the Suraj Kund on the Vipula hill at Rajgir, Buchanan noticed a small ruined shrine, with a stone slab containing foot prints carved in relief like those worshipped by the Jainas The slab contained an inscription of A D 1150 and mentions a name Bhaleminde, from which Buchanan considered it to be a Jain temple, though the local Brahmins claimed it to be a temple of Dattatreya

**Bhagalpur** . In the district of Bhagalpur many evidences have been found to prove the flourishing condition of Jainism in the medieval period In Sultanganj there are remains of a mosque on

the bank of the Ganga just facing the temple of Ajgabinatha Here there was a Jain temple in the medieval period which was afterwards transformed into a mosque Even today, here are to be found many Jain images engraved on stone slabs The caves on the Patharaghati hill were the abodes of the Jain ascetics in the 6th and 7th centuries There are paintings of the 7th and 8th centuries which are also called the eighty four *munis*

Mandaragiri, a small hillock situated at 49 km from Bhagalpur, is mentioned as the place of salvation of the Tirthankara Vasupujya in the *Uttarapurana* [77] There are two Jain temples on the hill which have been repaired from time to time The seven feet wide wall of the bigger temple indicates it to be of the 5th century A D

Beglar[78] attributes the building to the Sravakas or Jainas and adds that one of the rooms contain the sacred black foot prints, apparently of a Tirthankara,[79] sculptured in stone and set up on a platform It's art and stone prove it to be of the 8th and 9th century [80] In the smaller temple, there are three foot prints, all of the medieval period [81] In the big temple over the inner door is engraved an old statue [82]

There is an early image of Tirthankara Shantinatha at Sri Champapura Digambara Jain Siddhaksetra, Nathanagar [83] The Jina is seated in the *samprayankasava* on a double petalled lotus pedestal The striking iconographic feature in this sculpture is the presence of eight *Jyotiskadevas,* namely Surya, Chandra, Mangala, Budha, Vrhaspati, Sukra, Sani and Rahu [84] It is singular specimen inside the province of Bihar showig only eight *Jyotiskadevas* reported so far [85] This image in question has been considered to have belonged to the early Pala period or circa 8th century A D [86]

Besides, a stone sculpture with seated statue of Tirthankar Adinatha and his parents has been kept at Nathnagar Jain Siddhaksetra

also [87] A *chaubisi*, having Adinatha as the chief deity and the remaining twentythree Jinas encircling him either in *khadagasana* or in *padmasana mudra*, was discovered along with several ancient icons from a dried tank near Champapur in the year 1914 A D is also enshrined in the same *siddhaksetra* mentioned above This *chaubisi*, a rare of its kind from iconographic point of view, can be dated in circa 8th century A D [88]

A rare *khadagasana* image of Tirthankar Adinatha of the period 7th-8th century A D has been kept in the same Champapura Jain Siddhaksetra, Nathanagar [89] The image shows Tirthankar Adinath standing in *kayotsarga mudra* and his hands are hanging upon his knees On both sides of the standing Jina, we find a number of seated deities Besides the figures of Sasanadevi Chakresvari, the Yaksa Gomukh, Vidyadhara, Gandharva Yaksa and Yaksa Kubera, we find Yaksa Bhrkuti[90] also engraved on the ashy black stone In the Jain art of Bihar, this representation of Bhrkuti is rare from the iconographic point of view [91]

**Manbhum** : During this age, Jain travellers and Jain teachers built many Jain temples and installed Jain images at different places in Manbhum In March 1974, twentynine Jain bronzes, of which twentyseven are Tirthankaras, were discovered at Alaura in District Dhanbad[92] of the period ranging from 9th to 11th centuries A D Some of them depict the Tirthankaras Rsabhanatha and Mahavira together, each with his respective *lanchana* The distribution of images in this hoard indicate the popularity of the different Tirthankaras among the votaries of the Jain faith in this region and about the period Rsabhadeva has the largest number of representations (as many as eight) followed by those of Mahavira and Kunthunatha, each having six representations.[93] Chandraprabha and Parsvanatha have each two representations, while Ajitanatha, Vimalanatha and Neminatha have one representation each [94] In the

group, there is also found a representation of Ambika [95] Some of them can be attributed, stylistically, to the early eleventh century

Palma, a place in the same district, preserves several Jain antiquities of our period Hunter[96] refers to a large mound of a Jain temple with numerous images of the Jain Tirthankaras scattered about It is obvious that there were quite a number of Jain temples indicating the existence of some settlement of Jain community nearby In 1902, Bloch[97] could see only a heap of debris with some stone pillars and two colossal statues of Tirthankaras lying at the site

From the same place, three stone sculptures[98] have been recovered, of which two represent respectively the Tirthankaras Ajitanatha and Santinatha The Third image has been described to be that of Neminatha, but from the impression of elephant on it this has probably to be indentified as the representation of Ajitanatha The first image shows the Jina installed within a shrine which is fronted by a trefoil arch and surmounted by a curvelinear *sikhara* of the Nagara order It is evident that the Jain votaries also erected their shrines in the prevalent style of Northern India The thid image is flanked on either side by an attendant with flywhisks All these images may be assigned to the eleventh century [99] In this connection it may also be useful to mention of a bronze figure of Adinatha from Manbhum,[100] which is now preserved in the Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta [101] A rather course execution would refer it to a date not earlier than the twelfth century A D

**Singhbhum :** In the medieval ages, a number of Jain temples were constructed in this district The Jain religion and art flourished here and it is evident from certain existing relics of Besinagar, ascribed by Beglar to the seventh century [102] But most of them have been removed or damaged and only a few Brahmanical scuptures

can be seen there

**Nalanda :** The only Jain record[103] of the Pala period has been discovered from Baragaon [104] The inscription belongs to the 24th year of the reign of Rajyapala, who ruled in the first half of the 10th century A D [105] The object of the inscription is to record the visit of one Vaidanatha, son of Manoratha of the merchant family, to the temple

Besides, we have some Jain statues found at Nalanda of the period under review A snake hooded female figure in stone[106] probably representing the Jain *yakshi* Padmavati has been recovered and is assigned to the 9th-10th century [107] There is also a bronze image of Ambika at National Museum, which has been acquired from Nalanda of the same age [108]

**Patna :** An image of Tirthankar Parsvanatha is kept in a small Saiva shrine at Gulbi ghat, Patna [109] The Tirthankara is seated in *paryamkasana* beneath the seven headed cosmic serpent It is carved out of black basalt in front of stela The image represents the Jain, seated on a double petalled lotus seat placed over a *pancharatha* pedestal, in the attitude of meditation It has been represented nude and is accompanied by the two male attendants on either sides, instead of his Yaksa and Yaksis The image belonged to circa 10th-11th century A D [110]

**Gaya :** There is a big stone wall in dilapidated condition on the summit of Koluha hill in the Gaya district There is a pond within the walls A lot of facts has come to light regarding Jainism in the area from the excavation of this pond On the north of the pond, after a little ascent, there is a temple of Parsvanatha and a terrace A little further there lies a mound the upper part of which is levelled land, with a big hole in the middle called the Yajnakunda The inscription found on its four sides have not as yet been fully

deciphered but a word Jaunasena[111] is worth consideration This word may lead to the assumption that this place was the courtyard of Jinasena, the author of the *Padma Purana* (9th century A D )

Some scholars are of opinion that modern Patna[112] is the *tirtha* of Jinasena, the author of *Padma Purana,* but so far no strong evidence has been put in support of this theory In spite of there being a difference of view regarding his birth place, there are strong evidences to prove that he lived in Bhadripura (Bhandil), Pataliputra and Champa

A Digambara Jain statue discovered from Gaya has been kept in Allahabad Museum (No 280) The statue is in *kayotsarga* posture and has been assigned to the 8th-9th century A D [113] The image is certainly of Tirthankara Rsabha and there are twentyfour smaller images of other Jinas including that of Parsva with hooded umbrella and Rsabha [114]

**Hazaribagh** : Another important sacred place of the Jainas in Bihar is the Kuluha hill, about 9 km to the south-west of Hunterganj in Hazaribagh district On the western foot of the hill, Stein[115] noticed a small mound of stones, with a small Jain image of Parsvanatha with the usual snake hood canopy over its head Local people call it *Dvarapala*

There are two groups of crude rock cut sculptures of the Jain Tirthankaras known as *Dasavatara* images, apparently for their number ten in each groups [116] The first group consists of five standing and five seated images of the Jinas Another group of ten figures of the Jains located at a short distance, are all seated and each of them have a female *chowri* bearer on either side and the characteristic *lanchanas,* are however, badly defaced On the top of the row are inscription

On the top of the Akaslochana hill, Stein[117] noticed a pair of foot prints cut into the rock and considered them to be of the Jain Tirthankaras, though the local people believed them to be Vishnu The inscriptions found on the hill, however, show that some of the ruins would date about 7th or 8th century A D

**Shahabad** · The Shahabad District of Bihar has also served several images of Jain Tirthankaras of this period which show the existence and importance of Jainism in that region In Patna Museum, there is a broken statue of Tirthankara Adinatha, which bears the impression of Gandhara art in its face and hair style But there is no emblem of ox on its pedestal This statue has been assigned to the 8th century A D [118]

There is another black statue of Chandraprabha which is six inches in height This was also recovered from Chausa in Shahabad It has been dated to the 10th century A D [119] Besides, there are four statues of Neminatha and Adinatha there, of the period 10th century A D [120]

The Chausa hoard has presented fifteen to sixteen other statues[121] of Jain Tirthankaras, but due to the lack of any *lanchan* on it, it is difficult to ascertain as to whose figures these are All these statues are in *padmasana* posture and are not later than 10th-11th centuries A D [122]

**Other Jain images from Bihar** ·

There are several Jain statues at National Museum, New Delhi, which have been recovered from Bihar There is preserved a statue of the Yakshi of Neminatha standing under a mango tree on a lotus seat [123] Two dancing figures are shown on her either sides An image of Jina, with two lotus flowers, is carved above the head of the deity The image of the Devi is a product of Pala artists of Bihar [124] There is also an image of Chandraprabhu there of the same period [125]

At the National Museum, there is a stone staute of Tirthankara Rsabha in standing *kayotsarga* pose He wears a *jata-mukuta* and is flanked by an attendant and a flying Gandhara on either sides This image of Bihar is carved in black basalt and is datable to the 11th century A D [126]

## DECLINE OF JAINISM IN BIHAR :

### Non-existence of Jain religion in Northern Portion :

During this period (c 600-1200 A D ) we find a gradual decline of the popularity and spread of Jainism in Bihar It did not enjoy the same extent of popularity as the contemporary religions of Buddhism, Saivism and Vaisnavism etc enjoyed Except a few selected pockets, Jainism was fighting a losing battle in this region The northern portion of this region, which was once the cradle of Jain Tirthankaras, teachers and their followers had lost its real glory and importance

During the closing years of our period (c 1200 A D ), we have stray references to the existence of Jain population in Vaisali, Mithila, and other parts of North Bihar which show that Jainism had become practically non-existent in this region, for we don't have frequent mentioning of the Jain followers in the contemporary records The Jainas even forgot their real tradition and the real birth place of their prophet Mahavira A Digambara Jain of Ujjaini Madankirti describes twentysix Jain *tirthas* in his poetical text *Sasanachatustrimsika,* but Kundapura or Kundalgrama or Vaisali does not find a place there [127] A Tibetan monk pilgrim of Buddhist faith Dharmasvami (A D 1197-1264) who visited India in A D 1234-1236, passed through Vaisali He found there a stone image of the Arya Tara and saw a female lay supporter staying in the street He, however, does not say even a word whether there were Jainas or not [128] It seems that while there were still some Buddhists in the

13th century, there was probably no Jain population worth the name left at Vaisali at the time.[129]

The *Vividhatirthakalpa*[130] of Jinaprabha Suri also does not give any importance to the Jain centres of North Bihar including Vaisali Though this book contains fiftynine chapters devoted to different *tirthas*, no independent chapter has been alloted by the Jain author to the birth place of the last Tirthankara [131] Even a late Svetambara text *Tirthamalacaityavandana* (17th century), which gives 76 names of the ancient Jain *tirthas*, does not speak of Vaisali or Kundapura The non-mentioning of the place of Mahavira's birth and distortion of the geography of this place does not show that they deliberately ignored them, but as it was of no importance for the Jainas, they did not see any cause to mention it in their writings

**Jainas settle in South Bihar :**

The find spots of the Jain temples, images and inscriptions show that while it completely lost its importance during the closing centuries of our period in North Bihar, it remained confined to the hilly regions of South Bihar [132] The Rajgir-Pavapuri-Biharsharif areas became the centre of the activities of the Jainas [133] Pavapuri was accepted as the place of *nirvana* of Mahavira and Kundalpura or Lachhuar was recognised to be the place of Mahavira's birth [134] The Jain associations of Pavapuri or Pavapura are traced to the beginning of the 13th century when an image of Sri Mahavira was installed there in A D 1203 Madankirti, who wrote in the second quarter of thirteenth century, mentions Pavapura as one of the 26th Jain *tirthas* during his time Jinaprabha Suri (1332 A D ) devotes full two chapters to Pavapuri in his book *Vividhatirthakalpa* Buchanan[135] speaks of a group of temples around two courtyards in the nearby village and refers to a number of inscriptions in them It may, however, be stated that no Jain monument or antiquity has

been recovered from the area which can be positively dated beyond the 14th century A D All these references show that this place had not been well established before the 14th century A D [136]

A natural question arises here as to why the Jainas fled from the North Bihar and shifted to South Bihar in the hilly areas Scholars have suggested several causes leading to their migration and it has been said that since the Jainas went about naked, it was natural for them to choose hilly areas in the adjoining areas of South Bihar where they could easily get natural cover and shelter

Though this may appear some what convincing, it does not seem to be the real and sole cause As a matter of fact the Jainas were in the search of some safe place of protection against the barbarous attacke of the Muslims Therefore the Jainas cut off themselves completely from North Bihar, as that was the main target of the Muslim invasion in the Gangetic plains, and tried to protect themselves in the hilly regions, though they could not succeed in their attempts

**Shifting of Jainism to Western and Southern India :**

During this period, Jainism gradually migrated to other parts of India, especially Rajasthan, Gujarat, Central and South India [137] These centres were connected with the activities of Jain monks and by c 1000 A D, it was firmly entrenched in these regions where it flourished and developed for centuries The author of the *Prabohacandrodaya,* [138] a play written in the 11th century A D, says that as a result of persecution by the Brahmins, the Digambara Jainas fled to Panchala, Malawa, Abhura and Anarta We should remember that this play was staged in the court of Candella Kirtivarman and therefore its evidence has real value [139] There is very great reason to believe that by 1000 A D, Jainism was almost completely eclipsed from majority of places in the region of Bihar [140]

**Causes for the downfall of Jainism :**

The Jain system, which had never spread very widely nor had become aggressive in this region, collapsed very soon in face of its rival cult, Buddhism and Puranic Hinduism Several circumstances and causes led to the disappearance of Jainism in this region and its popularity and development in Western and Southern parts of the country During this period, it could flourish and spread in the Deccan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Kerala and Andhra etc The main causes, which led to its disappearance from Bihar during the last centuries of our period, are given below

**The attack from the South :** Due to political changes and foreign attacks, the Jainas scattered away, as their temples were destroyed and their followers were persecuted When the influence of Jainism started lessening even in South Bihar, the excesses on them increased and though they followed the Jain religion imperceptly, the circumstances forced them to change their religion outwardly So were the *Sarakas* of Singhbhum, Manbhum and Lohardagga They were originally followers of Jainism and were called 'Sravakas' (devotees or laymen of Jainism), but this term degenerated to the term 'Saraka' and the Adivasis call them 'Sonaka' nowadays They are pure vegetarians, do not believe in violence, protect animals, and accept Parsvanatha as their deity They have a custom like the Jain *Marwari* to finish their meals before evening Most of them have taken to cultivation and call themselves Hindu [141] It is estimated by some authorities that in the Gupta and post-Gupta period, the whole tract known as the District of Manbhum was suffused with Jain culture [142]

In these regions the serpent God called *Manasa* is worshipped during the monsoon months of *Asadha*, *Sravana*, *Bhadrapada* and *Aswina*,[143] particularly in the months of *Sravana* and *Bhadrapada*

This may be having some connections with Dharamendra that adorned Parsvanatha's head in the shape of *Nagaraja*[144] This apparently shows that in course of time they took to worshipping the symbol adored by Parsvanatha but originally they must have been the followers of Parsvanatha[145]

In the medieval ages a number of Jain temples were constructed in South Bihar and even now Jain archaeological remains are found at many places Upto the 8th and 9th century A D Jainism was still holding its place and its followers had a strong footing here It began to face it's downfall from the 11th century In 1023 A D the Chola king Rajendra Deo attacked the king of Bengal, Mahipal, and during their campaign and withdrawal from this place,[146] they destroyed the Jain temples due to religious differences Later on, the Pandya kings badly damaged the Jain temples and monuments and forced the *Sravakas* to changes their religion They changed their profession also, and concentrated on agriculture Even the pilgrims and Jain travellers were stopped from entering these places and thus the districts of Singhbhum and Manbhum (now Dhanbad) were detached from the rest of the Jain world Though they changed their religious faith, they maintained their tradition and called themselves 'Sravaka' or 'Saraka' (The area of South Bihar, where the Jain Sravakas are found even today is shown in Map No 3) It is only their tradition that confirms their old faith which was Jainism Coopland has mentioned the 'Sarakas' of Manbhum in its Gazetteer in 1991 and calls them originally Jain by faith

**Lack of Royal Patronage :** Jainism in its beginning might have obtained the support of some of the early kings of Magadha, Vaisali and Champa and many officials of Bihar as well, but it did not receive direct royal patronage or assistance during the period under review From the period of the Gupta onwards, the rulers of Bihar started patronising either Brahmanism or Buddhism and

tried to restore it as the court religion The royal patronage to a religion certainly helps its propagation to a great extent However, Jainism continued to appeal, more or less, directly to the masses and remained existent among the general people only We know of no king in Bihar during this period who subscribed to the faith of Jainism like the previous dynasties of ancient India On the other hand we have definite evidences of the conversion of Gujarat kings into Jainism and patronage of this faith by the Western kings It is why the great Council of Jainism was convened in Vallabhi and not in the eastern part of India The princely names the Jaina best love to recall in this connection are Mandalika, a king of Saurastra (Kathiawad) about A D 1059, who repaired the temple of Neminath on Mt Girnar [147]

Hemacharya or Hemachandrasuri, who became the head or *Acharya* in 1121 A D,[148] influenced Siddharaja Jayasimha and converted Kumarapala (1125-1159) who is said to have established Jainism as the state religion Since then, the headquarters of Jainism were no longer to be found in Bihar, the birth place and place of religious activities of Jain Tirthankaras, but were transferred to South and West of this region

**Decline of Trade :** Jainism forbade killing of animals and insects and preached non-violence So those artisans and craftsmen, whose occupation endangered the life of other creatures did not like Mahavira's ideas The followers of Jainism, therefore, specialised in the traffic of manufactured goods and confined themselves to financial transactions This probably explains why Jainism came to be increasingly associated with the spread of urban culture and maritime trade But due to the political disintegration, instability, and foreign attacks in this region, the trade and commerce of this land was badly handicapped and the traders started leaving the cities and towns of Bihar The traders were the key holders of this faith

in the land due to the principles of Jainism which permit a trader to take profit in his business These traders shifted to the Rajasthan and Gujarat areas or they were compelled to return back on agriculture In Western and Southern India, it was because of the enthusiasm of traders that this religion managed to retain its hold for a fairly good period and it is not without reason that the population in this area is predominantly Jain even today [149] This population has also preserved in a large measure the originality and integrity of its system as also its remarkable cultural heritage which is quite rich in historical material as well

**Disintegration of Jain Church :** The other helping cause for the downfall of Jainism in this region appears to have been the disintegration in the Jain Church itself The intellectuals and the Jain religious teachers of this faith lacked uniformity in their respective opinions and principles, and quarrelled among themselves As such, the rival religions-the Vaisnavism and Saivism-fished advantageously in the troubled water, and succeeded in establishing their footing The *gurus* and scholars of these cults dedicated their lives for the upliftment of their faith But as Jainism lacked such selfless devotees, it naturally lagged behind, and failed in gaining any ground of progress

**The Muhammadan attacks :** Not only the intrusions from inside the country, but foreign attackes also forced the Jainas to leave their original home of Bihar and to move to other parts of the country After the disintegration of the North Indian empires and particularly Magadha, weak petty rulers established their own loose kingdoms and this political disintegration invited the foreigners to attack their kingdoms The Muslim conquest, no doubt, gave the last blow to the tottering edifice of Jainism in this region

During the course of this attacks, Muhammad-bin-Bakhtiar

captured Bihar and Bengal and razed many temples to groud, massacred their communities and burnt their manuscripts They were always conscious for the spread and development of Islam where ever they went during their campaigns Due to these attacks, Jainism generally suffered in the number of its adherants, royal and popular patronage, its political and communal power and even in its religious and ethical influence [150]

Many of the most beautiful Mohammadan mosques in India have woven into their fabric stones from Jain shrines which the ruthless conqurors had destroyed [151] All that the victorious Muhammadans had to do was to make slight structural alterations in the temples and buildings Fergusson[152] has mentioned how a Jain or Buddhist temple was converted into a mosque by slight alterations Even the Barabar Caves dedicated to the monks during the Maurya period were occupied by Muslim hermits [153] The ruthless religious persecution forced the Jainas for any sort of alternative and this led to the migration

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130 Completed in A D 1332
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132 Mostly all the Jain antiquities have been found in this region of Bihar during the period 600-1200 A D
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134 The Digambara Jainas identify Kundapura or Kundalpura near Nalanda District and Svetambaras with the village of Lachwad or Lachhuar in the Monghyr District (*Jain Siddhanta Bhaskara*, Vol X, p 60)
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136 All these circumstances make us to doubt the correctness of the identification of this site with that of Mahavira's death
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149 Out of 3,206 038 Jainas in India (which is 0 48 per cent of the total population of the country) their main concentration are in Gujarat M P , Karnataka, Maharastra and Rajasthan The census held in 1981 reports that there were 18,642 Jainas in Bihar which was 0 03 per cent of the total population *(Census of India 1981* Series 1 1985)

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# Conclusion

In the foregoing chapters, we have surveyed the history of the rise, development and decline of Jainism in Bihar from the 6th century B C to A D 1200 Therein, we have not given much emphasis on the principles, philosophies, moral aspects and customs of the Jainas, but we have tried to concentrate mainly upon the historical background and the historical perspective, in which the stream of this religion experienced its rises and falls in Bihar In course of such survey, we have tried to highlight the underlying causes which contributed to the appearance and growth and also the dwindling of this creed in the different periods and places

Though some two and a half thousand of years have rolled away since the advent of Tirthankara Mahavira, the thick mist of time has failed to hide the lustre of this magnanimous Nigantha Nataputta, who is still being held in all his glories and with all reverence, not only by the followers of his religion alone, but by the people at large For a student of history, Mahavira was not only the preacher of this religion of Jainism, but was the mightiest among them all, so much so that the religion came to be identified by his name alone In dealing with his life and career, attempts have been made to discuss only those salient features of his life, which were important for the coming days and which influenced the common people and political circles to the extent of making this religion

popular in the areas and period Over the location of the exact place of Mahavira's *nirvana* itself, there has been a great controversy With very many available sources, I have tried to satisfy the curiosity by showing this place to have existed in modern Eastern U P and not in South Bihar, when the latter is even to-day being regarded as sacred by the Jain community Similar attempts have also been made to strengthen the view of Mahavira's birth at Kundagrama of the present Vaisali district His meeting with Gosala is important not only from sectarian point of view, but from historical as well The separation of Mankhaliputra Gosala from Mahavira forced the former to propound a new schism, although it did not last long and later on the two sects came so close to each other as to be identified as one

Jainism developed and spread not only under the banner of the Jain *gurus,* preachers and their followers, but it got its entrance into the royal courts and institutions as well Several ancient Indian dynasties gave their full cooperation and protection to it, and even those who did not embrace it openly, acknowledged its philosophy, ethics and moral code of law Though time and again Jainism had to fight against Hinduism, Buddhism, Ajivikism and other religious creeds in Bihar, nevertheless it survived and succeeded in maintaining its originality and purity Buddhism, which got royal patronage and support during several of the Ancient Indian dynasties, upto the 3rd century A D and afterwards, could not survive in Bihar for a long period, and finally it preferred in migrating to other neighbouring countries rather than to stay within the land of Bihar and even India On the other hand, the rise of Jainism in Bihar was not steady Sometimes its growth seemed satisfactory and sometimes it seemed to lose even its original weight Like the ebb and flow of a river, the stream of Jainism had its rises and falls, but, for the aforesaid reasons, it never went completely dry Though it got a

tough resistance of Hinduism during the period of the Guptas and onwards, the archaeological findings clearly state that it was still popular among the general masses and people used to worship the statues of several Jain Tirthankaras during those days

But the story of the last phase of Jainism of our period in Bihar, which starts from A D 600 and finishes with the final Muslim conquest, is really very terrific and terrible The Muslim invader Muhammad Sahabuddin Ghori invaded India in A D 1186 and finally defeated Prithviraj Chauhan in A D 1192 The commandor General of Ghori, Ikhtiaruddin - Muhammad - bin - Bakhtiar, made a severe attack on the borders of Bihar in about A D 1200 and subjugated almost whole of the modern Bihar The conquerors tried their level best to root out the culture, art, philosophy, religion and literature of the ancient past and in those plunders, the followers of Jain religion naturally migrated to the safest places in and outside Bihar for keeping the ideas of their faith pure and alive During this period, Jainism shifted from its Northern portion to the hilly areas of South Bihar and even went to the deserted places in modern West Bengal and Orissa regions

The Jain antiquities have been found throughout all the parts of Bihar of the period of our study Several inscriptions, both of public and private nature, have been found on and around the boundaries of Bihar, which show the prevalence of this religion in our land The study of any sort of history, which is based only on literary evidence, and which does not take into consideration an equal amount of epigraphical material, cannot be perfect and trustworthy

Though a few figures of ascetics sitting in *dhyanamudra,* found at Harappa and Mohenjodaro, are said to be resembling the Jain figures, the earliest statue and remains of any Jain antiquity in Bihar

have been recovered from Lohanipur (Patna) of the Mauryan period Images of various periods have been discovered from almost all parts of Bihar and they represent different Jain Tirthankaras as well as Jain *yaksa* and *yaksinis* These statues are made either of stone or of bronze Besides, several temples, caves, *ayagapatas* and *manastambhas* support our view with regard to the popularity and development of Jainism in this region during different periods Some temples have no doubt been made in the recent past centuries, but they preserve some old and important Jain figures The makers of these must, naturally, have been the followers of the Jain religion, but occasionally even non-Jainas were seen to have built Jain temples and made endowments to them Though archaeological investigations of historical period have never been neglected in Bihar, further extensive excavations at Bhelwar (Gaya), Jayamangalagarh (Begusarai), Chirand, Champa, Katra, Antichak, Chechar, Buxur and Vaisali may reveal some new and interesting facts relating to the history of Jainism of the period and area under review

Jainism had a very old history during which it has faced a large number of upheavals and vicissitudes vis-a-vis the political and religious life of the people But it has stood their challenge well It is a fact that this religion has been limited to a small community and its following is numerically limited,[1] but it is noteworthy that its followers have a deep involvement in its traditions and a profound attachment to its principles Besides, they keep themselves away from for cible conversions unlike some other sects It has enjoined on its followers a life of hard discipline and has resisted the temptation of winning large masses of people even through soft approaches and easy appeals It is why it did not cross the boundaries of India and even in India, it has remained confined to a small section of the people But it deepended the bases of moral

strictness, austere, living, and rigid discipline, and particularly the Jain rituals, customs, traditions, institutions, art and architecutre, are still pure, inspite of various foreign attacks and all these have amply helped in preserving the Indian culture in itself

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1 So far the present population of Jainas is concerned, there are only 18,642 Jainas in Bihar and 32 lakhs throughout in India, which is 0 48 per cent of the total population of the country (Based on 1981 Census Report cf *Jain Journal* Oct 1986 pp 35-36) But in my personal survey, I have found that a good number of Jainas register themselves as Marwari and Hindu and not as Jainas The figure therefore naturally may vary

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